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ABSTRACT

Intended to help secondary school English teachers integrate literature study and composition instruction, this booklet explores the relationship between literature and composition and suggests ways of designing instruction so that students may write effectively about the literature they read. The first portion of the booklet discusses such components of research and theory as the assessment of student response to literature, the basics of literary interpretation, and principles of sequencing and activity design. The practice portion of the booklet presents instructional activity sequences for supporting an interpretation, explicating implied relationships, and analyzing authors' generalizations. (HTH)

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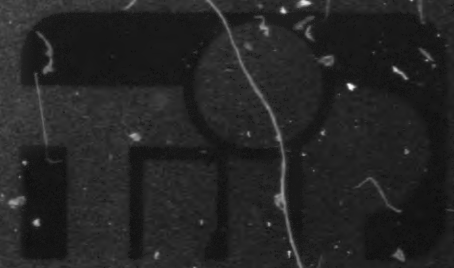

THEORY & RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

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Writing about Literature

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Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). ERIC provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development reports, and related information useful in developing effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current information and lists that information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—a considerable body of data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of educational research are to be used by teachers, much of the data must be translated into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports easily accessible, NIE has directed the ERIC clearinghouses to commission authorities in various fields to write information analysis papers.

As with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as a primary goal bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of booklets designed to meet concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with a review of the best educational theory and research on a limited topic, followed by descriptions of classroom activities that will assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

The idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks offer similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are, however, noteworthy in their sharp focus on educational needs and their pairing of sound academic theory with tested classroom practice. And they have been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Board. Suggestions for topics are welcomed by the Board and should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Charles Suhor
Director, ERIC/RCS

1 Theory and Research

Literature and composition are both essential parts of the secondary language arts and English curricula. Too often, though, they have been separated rather than integrated within these curricula. Classroom instruction is often planned around discrete units of each: a literature unit, followed by a language or composition unit, followed by a literature unit, and so forth. Elective programs may have compounded the problem as well. A glance at typical offerings in elective programs suggests the separation of composition and literature: Composition I, Elements of Writing, Literature of the Midwest, and Major British Writers. Commenting on this separation, Anthony R. Petrosky explains,

> As a result of separate instruction and assessment of progress in reading, literature, and composition, curricula in language are fragmented to the point where literature is often kept out of reading, and composition instruction seldom includes reading or study of literary works, except as models of writing (1982, 19).

Although there are few texts devoted entirely to writing about literature, most composition texts and literature anthologies commonly used at the secondary level fall short of thoroughly integrating literature and composition instruction. Because of their comprehensive nature, composition texts can provide only very general, generic instruction concerning writing about literature. Space limitations normally allow these texts to devote only one or two chapters—if any—to the subject. In a like manner, most literature anthologies merely assign writing, usually in the form of discussion or reaction questions which follow selections, and occasionally provide models of professional criticism which students are to imitate. At best such textbooks explain what students are to do in these assignments, but this is little preparation if students lack the skills necessary to interpret and write about literature.

A logical means of reducing this fragmentation within the secondary English curricula is to find ways in which literature and composition instruction can complement one another. The theory and research presented in this booklet explore the relationship between literature and composition and suggest ways of designing instruction so that students write effectively about the literature they read.

Assessment of Student Response to Literature

Evidence for the need to combine instruction in reading and writing is abundant. Most prominent, though, are the results of the 1979–80 National Assessment of Educational Progress in reading and literature, *Reading, Thinking, and Writing* (1981). This study, which primarily focused on literature, measured student performance on a wide range of multiple-choice and writing tasks. The study assessed the skills of more than 100,000 nine-, thirteen-, and seventeen-year-olds, comprising socioeconomic and geographic variations representative of the United States. The results indicate that American schools "have been reasonably successful" in teaching students to comprehend at the literal and lower inference levels and to arrive at what the report calls "preliminary interpretations." Older students were better at these skills, and by age seventeen most could express their initial ideas and judgments, especially when these were concerned with personal reactions to what they read. However, the results strongly indicate the general inability of students to read critically or to support or explain their interpretations and responses to literature in any but the most superficial ways. Students at all levels "do not appear," says the report, "to have learned how to look for evidence for their judgments" (1981, 2). In addition, "students seem satisfied with their initial interpretations and seem genuinely puzzled at requests to explain or defend their points of view" (1981, 2). Even older students who did provide more evidence to support their interpretations than younger students, wrote

responses that were "superficial and limited," and the overwhelming majority of students "lacked strategies for analyzing or evaluating" what they read.

What is perhaps most indicative of the weaknesses of secondary students is that between 1970 and 1980 both thirteen- and seventeen-year-olds have become less likely even to try to interpret what they read and more likely simply to make unexplained and unelaborated value judgments. The report describes this finding in a most unsettling fashion. The change, the authors say, may be characterized by saying that during the seventies "17-year-olds' papers became somewhat more like 13-year-olds' papers" (1981, 3). In brief, over the last ten years, student skills in analyzing and writing about literature have seriously declined. In fact, the authors of the report say that the schools "have failed to teach more than 5 to 10 percent to move beyond their initial reading of a text" (1981, 2). Clearly, the results seem to indicate that new ways must be found to teach students the skills and strategies which will enable them to write effectively about the literature they read.

Rationale for Teaching Writing about Literature

If the results of the NAEP assessment of reading and literature suggest the need to combine instruction in literature and composition, the assumptions behind the study provide an even stronger imperative. As Judith A. Langer notes, the NAEP measured student performance from the "rich perspective" of "reading, reasoning, responding, and writing as integral parts of the 'literate' tradition" (1982, 336). It is from this "literate" stance that the NAEP authors argue that the skills students learn in studying and writing about literature are important for reasons beyond the secondary school. The report says that academic and vocational postsecondary education, as well as the business world, "require careful reading and strong skills in analysis, interpretation, and explanation" (1981, 5). Also, they point to the fast growing "information business" as an area in which students with these skills will have a "personal advantage," and the report argues that these skills will become increasingly important as the "information explosion continues." In addition, the authors believe that these skills "will be increasingly important at personal and social levels" in helping individuals and society find "what we value" and "what will make our lives worth living" (1981, 5). The report concludes by stating that "the habits of disciplined reading, analysis, interpretation, and discourse" (1981, 5) are important because they help ensure a society of intellectually strong and vital individuals.

Combining instruction in literature and composition in the context suggested by the NAEP report may also fulfill other important needs of the individual. Consider first Louise Rosenblatt's most important reason for having adolescents read literature:

> There is an even broader need that literature fulfills, particularly for the adolescent reader. Much that in life itself might seem disorganized and meaningless takes on order and significance when it comes under the organizing and vitalizing influence of the artist. The youth senses in himself new and unsuspected emotion impulsions. He sees the adults about him acting in inexplicable ways. In literature he meets emotions, situations, people, presented in significant patterns. He is shown a causal relationship between actions, he finds approval given to certain kinds of personalities and behavior rather than to others, he finds molds into which to pour his own nebulous emotions. In short, he often finds meaning attached to what otherwise would be for him merely brute facts (1968, 42).

The question left unanswered in her statement is how combining instruction in literature and composition might help a young reader "find meaning" out of chaos. Petrosky explains,

> Although Rosenblatt does not herself assert this point, writing about reading is one of the best ways to get students to unravel their transactions so that we [teachers] can see how they understand and, in the process, help them learn to elaborate, clarify, and illustrate their responses to the associations and prior knowledge that inform them (1982, 24).

In other words, having students write about what they read is one way teachers can help students turn "brute facts" into "meaning."

Petrosky carries his argument even further. After relating research and theory of reading and literature to research and theory in composition, he concludes that "our comprehension of texts, whether they are literary or not, is more an act of composition—for understanding is composing—than of information retrieval, and that the best possible representation of our understandings of texts begins with certain kinds of compositions, not multiple-choice tests or written free responses" (1982, 19). James R. Squire also concludes that comprehending what is read and writing about what is read are inextricably linked. Like Petrosky, Squire relates research in reading comprehension with that of composing. He argues that teach-

ing students to compose and comprehend are "what the teaching of the higher thought processes is all about" (1983, 582).

The NAEP report identifies current practices in teaching and testing as important reasons why students have difficulties in reading, interpreting, analyzing, and writing about literature. For example, the report indicates that teachers continue to utilize traditional patterns of "whole-class teaching and recitation." This pattern involves moving "quickly from student to student so that many students can be involved without any one student dominating." The result of this pattern is "teacher dominated questioning in which brief comments from individual students are solicited and extended discussion is deliberately curtailed" (1981, 2). Students, therefore, have "little opportunity to learn to formulate extended and detailed interpretations" (1981, 2). In addition, the NAEP observes that the relatively short responses encouraged by this methodology parallel "the multiple-choice and fill-in-the blank formats that dominate standardized and teacher-developed tests" (1981, 2). The problem, again, is that "when doing well in most school contexts requires little beyond short responses, it is not surprising that students fail to develop more comprehensive thinking and analytic skills" (1981, 2).

Studies by Taba (1955), Hoetker (1968), Squire and Applebee (1968), Purves (1981), and Applebee (1981) confirm the analysis made by the NAEP and suggest that for at least the last thirty years the teaching of literature has relied on lecture, recitation, and short-answer discussions, which may preclude students' engaging in the kind of extended inquiry necessary if they are to interpret, analyze, and write about the literature they read. Purves reports that students do very little writing about literature and that "teachers tend to teach in a lecture or lecture-recitation mode." When Applebee examined writing in the secondary schools in 1980, an examination that included 259 observations of ninth- and eleventh-grade students in two high schools, he found that only ten percent of the lesson time in English classes was devoted to writing that required students to provide at least a paragraph.

The NAEP report makes a number of suggestions about how instruction might be enhanced to help students master the skills which the assessment indicates they lack. The report found a positive correlation between students' interest or engagement in passages and the degree of elaboration in written responses. Therefore, instruction should be designed in ways that ensure student interest and engagement since this will improve the likelihood of student learning. In addition, the report calls for the creation of more situations which "require students to explain and defend their opinions at some length" (1981, 4). This should include "discussion activities in which students have to contend with the immediate demands of an audience, and extensive writing, in which longer segments of text must be organized and related to one another" (1981, 4). Also, the report asserts that "students need to be shown a variety of problem-solving and critical thinking strategies. Instruction in such skills should be systematic rather than accidental, as part of the curriculum in English" (1981, 4). The report underscores the need for small group discussions in order "to provide each student with opportunities to state and defend interpretations and opinions" (1981, 5). In emphasizing the most consistent weakness found in the assessment of reading and literature, that of students' apparent lack of systematic approaches to tasks which required analysis of a text, the authors make these recommendations: students need "to learn a variety of ways of analyzing a text in order to find evidence for judgments," (1981, 5) and to be given opportunities "to write at some length" in response to various texts and writing situations in order to practice applying "alternative approaches."

The results of the Purves (1981) and Applebee (1981) studies underscore the recommendations made by the NAEP; in fact, both researchers echo some of the same recommendations. To improve instruction, Purves suggests that the schools "become places where the language and reading of children are stretched, where a variety of experiences is made available, where lectures are replaced by questioning, and where individualized instruction is replaced by small group work" (1981, 106). From the classroom visits made in his study, Applebee highlights the characteristics of the "better" and "best" lessons that he observed. In these lessons students are "actively involved in teacher-designed tasks"; their "own experiences are freely incorporated into class discussions"; and they are "enthusiastic about their work." In addition, "the teacher encourages students to explore and discover and seldom dominates the class," and "writing is viewed as a means of learning and emerges naturally out of other activities" (1981, 104–5). In the most effective lessons Applebee observed, students "would work together to solve problems posed by the teacher; this forced students both to articulate their solutions more clearly and to defend them in the face of oppos-

ing opinions. . . . When writing assignments followed such lessons, they were treated by the students as a way to continue an activity in which they had become deeply involved" (1981, 105).

What Is Basic to Interpreting Literature?

How can we implement the recommendations made by the NAEP, Purves, and Applebee? In reflecting on how to engage students in interpreting literature and defending their ideas in writing, we must first ask, What is involved in understanding literature? Logic tells us that students' writing about a literary work will not be very meaningful if they do not understand the work they are trying to write about. What does a reader have to know or be able to do in order to understand a literary work?

Textbooks, handbooks, and curriculum guides often suggest that understanding literature involves understanding certain literary terms. The tenth-grade textbook *Question and Form in Literature* (Miller et al. 1982) presents the following list: alliteration, allusion, analogy, assonance, blank verse, cacophony/euphony, characterization, connotation/denotation, consonance, figurative language, foreshadowing, free verse, imagery, irony, lyric, metaphor, mood, narrative poetry, onomatopoeia, paradox, personification, plot, point of view, protagonist/antagonist, rhyme, rhythm, satire, setting, stereotype, style, symbol, theme, and tone. When faced with a list of these thirty-six terms, teachers may find it difficult to know where to begin. (The twelfth-grade text contains 160 terms.) Many of the terms are quite problematic. For example, *Question and Form in Literature* defines *theme* in this way: "Theme differs from the subject of a literary work in that it involves a statement or opinion about that subject" (1982, 599). Another literature text presents a thematic unit in which all of the works involve the "theme of reflections" (Rashkis and Bennett 1981). If a student were asked the theme of "Flowers for Algernon" (one of the selections in the thematic unit), would "reflection" be a satisfactory response? Would that response indicate a student's ability to analyze theme? Does identifying "reflections" as a "theme" require the same skills as explaining the author's opinion about "reflection"? Are the same skills involved in determining the theme of a fable when a moral is explicitly stated at the end as in determining the theme of a work when it is implied and never directly stated? Do these exhaustive lists of terms represent basic skills involved in interpreting literature? Are skills taxonomically related; in other words, are there some skills that must be mastered before others can be learned?

Recognizing the importance of questions like these in arriving at a framework for instruction in literature, many researchers and textbook editors have attempted to define the skills basic to comprehension of literature and have hypothesized various skill hierarchies. Yet, most of these hypotheses have not been substantiated by empirical testing. "A Taxonomy of Skills in Reading and Interpreting Fiction" (Hillocks and Ludlow 1984) is the only taxonomy to date strongly supported by empirical evidence. The dearth of empirical research on skill hierarchies is pointed out in Rosenshine's review of studies related to two issues: "whether there are distinct reading comprehension skills and whether there is evidence of a skill hierarchy" (1980, 535). He reports that "experimental studies were not found on these issues" (1980, 535) and that "the most ardent proponent of unique reading comprehension skills, Frederick Davis [1972], does not believe that his research has produced evidence in favor of a hierarchical skills theory" (1980, 545). In addition, Rosenshine states, "In the 1968 NSSE yearbook on reading instruction, two authors, Wittick [1968] and Robinson [1968], noted the lack of research on learning sequences" (1980, 545). In an analysis of four sequential questioning hierarchies (developed by Bloom, Sanders, Taba, and Herber), Christenbury and Kelly (1983) found no evidence to support the contention that the cognitive sophistication required to deal effectively with one identified level is superior to that required to deal with the levels below it or inferior to that required to deal with the levels above it. They also criticize the levels of these hierarchies as being "arbitrary," "overlapping," and "ambiguous."

The skill levels defined by Hillocks and Ludlow (1984) differ from those posited by Davis (1968, 1972) and the other researchers mentioned above. Hillocks and Ludlow's skill levels are clearly defined, and there is strong evidence of their hierarchical and taxonomical relationship. In coresearch with Bernard McCabe and J.E. McCampbell (1971) and independently (1980), Hillocks has identified seven skill types and corresponding question types. Below is his explanation of the seven levels from simplest to most complex. The skill types are not meant to be exhaustive but represent key skills which Hillocks indicates are of apparent concern to reading experts, teachers of literature, and literary critics. The first three skill types are literal level skills. They require identification of information

which appears explicitly in the text. The next four skill types are inferential level skills which require generalizations about relationships which are not stated in the text. The questions illustrating each of the skill levels are based on Chapter 1 of *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck. These questions comprise one of the four question sets examined in Hillocks and Ludlow's study.

Literal Level of Comprehension

1. Basic Stated Information—Identifying frequently stated information which presents some condition crucial to the story. Example: What happened to Coyotito?
2. Key Detail—Identifying a detail which appears at some key juncture of the plot and which bears a causal relationship to what happens. Example: Where did Coyotito sleep?
3. Stated Relationship—Identifying a statement which explains the relationship between at least two pieces of information in the text. Example: What was the beggars' reason for following Kino and Juana to the doctor's house?

Inferential Level of Comprehension

4. Simple Implied Relationship—Inferring the relationship between two pieces of information usually closely juxtaposed in the text. Example: What were Kino's feelings about the pearls he offers the doctor? Explain how you know.
5. Complex Implied Relationship—Inferring the relationship(s) among many pieces of information spread throughout large parts of the text. A question of this type might concern, for example, the causes of character change. This would involve relating details of personality before and after a change and inferring the causes of the change from the same details and interceding events. Example: In this chapter, Kino appears at home and in town. He feels and acts differently in these two places. Part of the difference is the result of what happened to Coyotito. Part is the result of other things. a) What are the differences between the way Kino acts and feels at home and in town? b) Apart from what happened to Coyotito, explain the causes of those differences.
6. Author's Generalization—Inferring a generalization about the world outside the work from the fabric of the work as a whole. These questions demand a statement of what the work suggests about human nature or the human condition as it exists outside the text. Example: What comment or generalization does this chapter make on the way "civilization" influences human behavior and attitudes? Give evidence from the story to support your answer.
7. Structural Generalization—Generalizing about how parts of the work operate together to achieve certain effects. To belong properly to this category, a question must first require the reader to generalize about the arrangement of certain parts of a work. Second, it must require an explanation of how those parts work in achieving certain effects. Example: Steinbeck presents a group of beggars in the story. a) Explain what purpose they serve in relationship to the first eleven paragraphs of the story. b) Present evidence from the story to support your answer.

In designing questions for these skill types it is important to note that a question must be classified as a skill type in conjunction with the text from which it is derived. For example, if *The Pearl* contained explicit statements telling how and why Kino acted differently at home and in town, question five above could *not* be classified as a complex implied relationship question. For the same reason, for a fable with an explicitly stated moral, a question that asks what the fable shows about human nature could not be considered an author's generalization question if a literal statement of the moral provides a satisfactory answer to the question.

In Hillocks and Ludlow's study, sets of questions, including the one above, for four different stories were administered to students from ninth grade to graduate school. The number of students responding to each question set ranged from seventy-seven to one hundred twenty-seven. Student scores were analyzed to determine hierarchical and taxonomical relationships of items on the individual tests using a form of the Rasch psychometric model known as the ordered categories model (Wright and Masters 1982; Wright, Masters, and Ludlow 1981), which considers partial and full credit. The results of the statistical analysis strongly support the hypotheses of the study: that the items are hierarchical and taxonomically related to each other. In other words, the question types are arranged from easiest to most complex, and the ques-

tion types are taxonomical—readers will tend not to be able to answer question seven if they could not answer question six, or not to be able to answer questions five, six, or seven if they could not answer question four, and so forth.

One question that arises from these results is how the skill levels identified and defined by Hillocks differ from those of other researchers such as Davis (1968, 1972). Davis (1968) identifies the following distinguishable skills: "recalling word meanings; finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase; drawing inferences from the content; recognizing a writer's purpose, attitude, tone, and mood; and following the structure of a passage" (Rosenshine 1980, 541). The results of Hillocks and Ludlow's study may help reveal problems in classifying skill levels in this way. In most fictional works, recognizing a writer's purpose (if that is the same as an author's generalization) involves drawing inferences. Therefore, these two skills, drawing inferences and recognizing a writer's purpose, in Davis's system of classification may overlap and, therefore, not be hierarchical. Hillocks and Ludlow's study suggests that in interpreting fiction there are at least four distinct skill levels of inference making, and in Davis's system inference making is handled as one skill type distinct from interpreting writer's purpose. These problems in identifying skill types may be the reason there is no evidence in Davis's work of a skill hierarchy.

Hillocks's taxonomy helps us identify some of the complex skills involved in interpreting fiction and has other important implications for designing instruction to help students master these skills. The results of Hillocks and Ludlow's study indicate the need to work hierarchically in helping students understand literature at higher levels. The teacher can use the question types to construct inventories to evaluate the skills of individual students and classes. After determining at what level students can work comfortably in interpreting literature in general, the teacher can design instruction to guide them in dealing with the next higher levels. Working hierarchically is necessary. For example, if we want students to understand the author's generalizations in a given work, we need to be sure that they first understand the lower level relationships (Hillocks and Ludlow 1983). But Hillocks warns that working at two or more levels above student competence is likely to result in failure to comprehend and hostility toward literature. Although this taxonomy admittedly does not include all possible types of questions, it provides a basis for the teacher to evaluate specific questions in study guides and composition assignments to determine what level of skill is required. Also it provides a framework for developing discussion questions and composition assignments appropriate for the level of a particular class.

Christenbury and Kelly are wary of questioning hierarchies because of the way "many questioning schemata have been abused and have become prescriptions rather than suggestions or guidelines" (1983, 5). We are not suggesting that working hierarchically means the teacher must adhere to an inflexible list of questions and suppress any responses that do not follow a prescribed pattern. In an advanced class in which students have exhibited facility with lower level questions, the teacher might skip literal level questioning altogether unless a problem involving literal understanding were to arise. In other cases, if students bring up a high-level question early in a discussion, there is certainly nothing wrong with pursuing students' responses (but if students are confused, the best strategy may be to use lower level questions to guide students toward the higher level questions). Furthermore, discussion could flow from inferential level to literal level if, in analyzing how a character changes, a student questions another's account of "what happens in the story." Most importantly, the taxonomy serves as a framework to help the teacher determine how to proceed in designing instructional activities to guide students in interpreting literature at higher levels.

If a teacher asks high level questions without adequately preparing students for these levels of interpretation, it is not very likely that sophisticated discussion will take place. As a result, the teacher may resort to a pattern of recitation and lecture. Luka (1983) suggests how this situation might arise. He observed that when teachers asked high level questions, they received inadequate responses or most often no responses from students and then resorted to explaining the answers themselves. When students are not able to respond to high level questions, the tendency of teachers seems to be to lecture, thereby making the high level interpretations themselves or to ask only literal level questions that students will be able to answer more readily. In this situation, it would not be at all surprising to find students having difficulty interpreting literature.

Writing to Express Interpretations

Although Hillocks's question sets were not used to evaluate writing ability per se, the questions at levels

five, six, and seven are typical of composition assignments often given to students. Questions at these levels are complex enough to generate lengthy compositions. For Hillocks and Ludlow's study, good answers for, say, a complex implied relationship question usually ranged from two to five sentences. The following is an answer to the question about how and why Kino acts and feels differently at home and in town. In the study this answer was rated as "good." (Answers were rated either "wrong," "partly right," or "good.")

> At home Kino feels comfortable, secure, and peaceful (that is until the scorpion stings Coyotito). In town he is nervous and afraid. The difference is caused by the bad way the townspeople have treated his race. They treat his race like animals. He is afraid of their power over his people but also angry that they have this power.

What is needed to expand this kind of response into an effective essay? Toulmin's (1958) analysis of argumentation helps answer this question. A response to a complex implied relationship, author's generalization, or structural generalization question is an argument in the sense that the writer is attempting to convince a reader that his conclusions about the text are accurate. Toulmin identifies three basic parts of an effective argument—claim, data, and warrant. The *claim* is the conclusion that is advanced; the *data* are the evidences; and the *warrant* is the explanation of why the data justify the claim or, in other words, authorization for the "leap" from the data to the claim.

An analysis of the above answer in Toulmin's terms reveals that it is basically a series of claims that could be elaborated with data and warrant(s). An effective composition on this question would perhaps begin with the ideas presented in the above answer as a series of claims to be argued (the "thesis"), and the body of the composition would present evidence and warrants for each of the claims. For the first claim, for instance, "At home Kino feels comfortable, secure, and peaceful," evidence might include quotations from the novel such as, "Kino heard the little splash of morning waves on the beach. It was very good—Kino closed his eyes again to listen to his music." At another point, the novel states that as Juana ate her breakfast, "Kino sighed with satisfaction." The music or family song Kino hears at home is described as "an aching chord that caught the throat, saying this is safety, this is warmth, this is the *Whole*."

This kind of analysis reveals some skills in addition to those suggested by the taxonomy that students need in order to write effective essays interpreting complex implied relationships, author's generalizations, and structural generalizations. They must identify each of their claims, find supporting evidence for each, organize their evidence, smoothly incorporate evidence in their papers, and explain how the evidence justifies the claims. As the NAEP and our experience in the classroom suggest, students have difficulty with these skills. Furthermore, being able to answer successfully a level five, six, or seven question in a short paragraph such as the one above for *The Pearl* does not automatically mean that the student can write an effective persuasive essay on the question. Students may be able to make insightful claims but not be able to support those claims in a composition.

Often students use virtually no data at all, presenting claim after claim in their compositions without any support. This makes the paper very weak even though some of the claims may be insightful. The NAEP reports that very few students at any age explained their initial ideas and judgments through reference to the text. Sometimes students state a claim (x), then present an extended summary of what happens in the short story or novel, and conclude with the idea "all of this shows x." In this case they lose the focus of their argument with much irrelevant detail. Students developing their papers in this fashion need to learn how to select and use appropriate evidence.

One of the greatest difficulties, even for competent writers, is providing warrants. They assume that the leap from data to claim is obvious and that it is, therefore, not necessary to elaborate on the connection between the two. In some cases the relationship may be obvious, but often it is not. For example, the student might use as evidence of Kino's fear in town the fact that he removes his hat when he knocks at the door of the doctor's house. Without a warrant explaining why the writer concludes that removing his hat shows fear, the reader may not be convinced by this evidence. He may conclude the action shows respect or good upbringing instead of fear.

The differences between a good answer to a complex implied relationship question in the taxonomy study and a good composition of literary analysis suggest that while reading and writing may be "reflections of the same cognitive process," (Squire 1983, 582) they also require a shift in focus for the student. Reading and responding to literature require students to focus on a topic (What do they know?), but writing a persuasive composition requires students to focus on a goal (What do they want to do with what they know?). In Squire's terms, the learner is *reconstructing*

the structure and meaning of another writer in comprehending; whereas, the learner is *constructing* meaning and developing ideas in composing. Flower and Hayes seem to agree with this concept of construction, "In composing, writers often work from the bottom of a tree [hierarchy] to more inclusive steps" (1977, 460). However, Flower and Hayes identify a problem at this point, "But readers [of analytic prose] understand best when they have an overview, when they can see an idea structure from the top down" (1977, 460). It is not enough then for the writer to *know* something from reading. The effective writer is aware of this shift in focus from what he knows to what he does with what he knows. He is aware of this difference between the manner in which he privately constructs a conclusion and the manner in which it is best presented to a reader who has not been privy to his thought processes.

These combined requirements for writing about literature--reconstructing an author's meaning, developing one's own ideas, and then refocusing those ideas for another reader—can quickly lead to what E. D. Hirsch, Jr. identifies as cognitive overload for the student. Hirsch tells us that cognitive overload

> . . . is based on the established truth that our cognitive faculties are very strictly limited in the number of things that we can pay attention to when we perform a complex task . . . We can and do perform tasks that have many more than ten or twelve aspects, but we cannot do this if all the aspects are unfamiliar ones which require attention simultaneously (1982, 45).

In terms of writing, Hirsch asserts that "having to pay attention to so many things at once degrades *every* aspect of performance so that highly intelligent adults can produce writing that is virtually unintelligible" (1982, 47). Of course, we can see how this applies even more to the junior high or high school student who is just beginning to make literary inferences and is just beginning to write analytical, persuasive papers. Very few—if any—of the complex skills required for these tasks are automatic for him or her.

Hirsch sees two ways to reduce cognitive overload: either make certain aspects of the task automatic or subdivide the task itself. In his article, Hirsch's solution to cognitive overload, primarily for younger students, is to automate certain scribal conventions such as spelling and penmanship which are present in every piece of writing.

Hirsch's argument of cognitive overload is convincing, but its implications can be taken much further than spelling and penmanship. If teaching composition is a matter of skill acquisition, as Hirsch asserts, then the skills of literary analysis, as defined by Hillocks's taxonomy, and the skills of argumentation, as defined by Toulmin, seem to be good places to start in designing instruction for teaching writing about literature. Having students practice reading and writing skills, through activities which gradually and sequentially add new skills to the students' repertoire, may help reduce cognitive overload.

This view seems to argue against the approach of teaching writing primarily through the analysis of models. If students analyze a model of a literary composition, they are looking at a finished product. Students are approaching the piece as readers not as writers, and they are not able to practice the various skills required to create a similar piece. As Flower and Hayes identify the problem,

> This gap between the textbook and the experience is a problem composition must face. Because the act of writing is a complex cognitive skill, not a body of knowledge, teaching writers to analyze the product often fails to intervene at a meaningful stage in the writer's performance. Such teaching leaves a gap because it has little to say about the techniques and thinking process of writing as a student (or anyone else) experiences it (1977, 450).

Principles of Sequencing and Activity Design

In the Practice section, we try to alleviate this gap by providing a sequence of activities to help students develop the thinking processes essential for writing about literature. The NAEP findings suggest that in interpreting literature most secondary students can make some simple, initial inferences. For this reason, the sequence of activities in the Practice section deals with the first three inferential levels defined by Hillocks in his taxonomy: simple implied relationships, complex implied relationships, and author's generalization. The activities are divided into three sequences which reflect the three inferential skill levels of the hierarchy: "Supporting an Interpretation," with activities that have students practicing simple inference skills; "Explicating Implied Relationships," with activities that have students practicing complex inference skills; and "Analyzing Author's Generalizations," with activities that have students making generalizations about the author's view of the world outside the work.

These three sequences and the three levels of inferential understanding with which they deal are not meant to be an exhaustive approach to literature. For

instance, they do not deal with the highest level of Hillocks's taxonomy, structural generalization. Yet, these three levels of inferential skills seem basic to understanding and interpreting fiction; furthermore, they seem to be at a meaningful stage of the secondary reader's developmental performance.

In terms of writing skills, the activities in each of the three sequences of the Practice section are designed to help students refocus their understanding of literature and turn it into a piece of analytic, persuasive writing. In each sequence, students practice drawing conclusions, collecting evidence to support their conclusions, evaluating their evidence, and articulating the relationship between their evidence and their conclusions.

In addition to the overall arrangement of activities from less to more sophisticated reading and writing skills, the Practice section also reflects several other principles of sequencing. For instance, each of the three sequences begins with an introductory activity. Generally, these early activities are nonliterary in nature, involving short scenarios, surveys, or role playing. They are designed to elicit students' opinions and knowledge and to introduce some of the key concepts on which the literature will focus. They are also meant to enhance purposeful reading and increase comprehension as students compare and refine their own ideas with respect to the literature once they begin reading (Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter 1984). For example, in the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" activity, which begins the "Analyzing Author's Generalization" sequence, students respond to a list of statements (including some clichés) about love and solicit others' opinions as well. Students and others are asked to agree or disagree with statements such as "Love is blind," or "Physical attraction must precede true love." After tabulating responses in class, students can see how their opinions differ from or are similar to others'. Later in the sequence of activities, students read a series of poems concerning love or marriage, and they draw conclusions about the poets' generalizations. In discussion, the teacher can refer to the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" and ask students whether they think individual poets would agree or disagree with certain statements on the survey. Students' opinions, of course, will have to be buttressed with specific references to the literary work. At this point, students may also begin to refine their own initial ideas as they take into account the poets' generalizations about love, which often challenge the clichés.

A recent pilot study provides empirical evidence suggesting that when students participate in introductory activities such as these, they achieve higher levels of comprehension than when they do not participate in these activities before reading. Kern found that students who participated in introductory scenario activities (similar to the "Ranking Scenarios" activity in the first sequence in the Practice section) before reading short stories achieved significantly greater comprehension scores ($p < .01$ and $p < .0005$) from the simple inference through the structural generalization levels than students who did not participate in these activities before reading the same stories. Kern's study suggests that such introductory activities "do help students make inferences and generalizations with greater precision" (1983, 31).

The activities within each sequence are also designed to reflect more structure at the beginning than at the end. This design gives students more support when they are unfamiliar with a skill. As students gain experience with the skills, the activities become more open-ended in nature. This movement from more to less structure is also linked with another principle of sequencing, a movement from teacher-directed activities in which the teacher provides more material or more input to student-independent activities in which students initiate discussion and generate their own material. This independence, of course, is the goal of all instruction. Because students have mastered skills independently and sequentially, they are able to perform tasks without cognitive overload. For instance, in the first sequence, "Supporting an Interpretation," students make a choice between one of two interpretations: either Atticus is or he is not characterized as a good parent in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird.* Then they are given "examples" to evaluate and asked to improve the weak ones. By the final writing assignment, however, students must generate their own evidence to support their conclusions about whether another character in the novel is a good parent.

This kind of instructional sequence does not ask students to "write about something in the novel you find interesting or meaningful," "write about your feelings and reactions while reading," or "write about what the novel means to you." We are not suggesting that these kinds of assignments have no place in instruction, but there is little in this type of assignment to ensure that students go beyond a simple literal level of reading or support their conclusions with specific evidence. A writer could explain, for instance, that he liked the suspense at the end and could not put the book down or that he really hated Bob Ewell because he was so filthy and disgusting or that the novel

showed what it was like to grow up in the South. But students may not know, as the NAEP report suggests, how to turn these kinds of initial responses into meaningful essays of interpretation. Beginning with more structure, as in this first sequence, may help students learn to make interpretations at progressively higher levels and support their interpretations effectively so that they will later be able to write successfully in response to more open-ended topics. In systematically leading to more independence, this kind of structuring may ultimately result in greater, rather than less, freedom for students. As Dewey explains, "Freedom is power to act and to execute independent of external tutelage. It signifies mastery capable of independent exercise, emancipated from the leading strings of others, not mere unhindered external operation" (1933, 87).

The principles of sequencing a series of activities should ideally be reflected in the design of a single activity. The activity may begin with simpler materials, teacher direction, and structure. However, by the end of the activity, students should be working with less structure and increasing independence on a more sophisticated level of performance. For example, in one activity, "Romantic Love/Marriage Fables," students begin their analysis of author's generalization in teacher-led discussion guided by a specific set of questions. The next step is student led as the class analyzes additional fables in small groups without direct teacher involvement. Finally, students work individually in writing an analysis of a fable not yet discussed.

All this mention of "practice," however, should not be equated with the notion of "rote" exercise. To ensure that students acquire the skills they need, the activities cannot be simple, pedantic exercises. To maximize its effectiveness in the classroom, each activity must elicit students' opinions and involvement. At whatever level, the activities must require critical thinking from the students. Students must be involved in problem-solving situations for which there are no transparent answers so that they practice explaining and defending their positions.

Many theorists and researchers conclude that environments in which students actively participate in explaining and defending their interpretations of literature are more conducive to learning than the lecture-recitation classroom (Taba 1955; Rosenblatt 1968; Squire and Applebee 1968; Applebee 1981; NAEP 1981; and Purves 1981). Teachers, too, often indicate that they would welcome more student interaction in discussions. So why the pervasiveness of teacher dominance and low levels of student interaction? According to Rosenblatt (1968), this lack of interaction with the text and other readers develops in part as a result of structuring questions for students ahead of time before seeing their reactions to a text rather than deriving questions from the initial responses and feelings students have as they are reading or after reading a text. Her method for achieving a lively discussion is to remove some of the traditional structures and allow students to express their ideas and reactions freely. She suggests beginning discussion with a question such as "How did the selection make you feel?" or "How did you react as you read?"

Creating a lively discussion in which all students actively respond to each other in sophisticated analysis of literature is a goal we share with Rosenblatt. Applebee praises Rosenblatt's goal of "helping the student reflect upon and thus refine his responses" but points out that Rosenblatt has "few examples of how this would be done" and that the examples of sophisticated discussion that she offers "implied quite a high level of initial response" (1974, 157). If students do not have skills necessary for interpreting implied relationships or generalizations, then discussion of their "feelings" and "reactions" may remain at a simplistic level of likes and dislikes related to the text and based on little understanding of it. In this case, removing "structure" and "freeing" students to express their ideas may not result in lively or sophisticated discussion.

As our own experience and the studies of classroom practices cited above confirm, getting good class or small group discussions going is very difficult. The physical problems alone—large class sizes and small rooms—can be quite taxing. Students are often reluctant to talk in a classroom filled with their peers. We have found that designing and sequencing instruction in the ways we describe helps overcome, or at least minimize, these problems. A classroom example may illustrate our point (Kahn, Walter, and Johannessen 1984). After students finished reading the short story "Paul's Case" by Willa Cather, we tried to begin discussion by asking students, "How did you react to Paul as you were reading the story?" Our high school students tended to respond with unspecific and unelaborated responses such as "He's weird," or "He's really out of it," or "He's a real loser." Probing students' reactions by asking them why they had these impressions failed to move them beyond a few references to Paul's peculiar habits. Only a few students responded, and there was virtually no interaction among students.

In contrast, students became actively involved, and their analyses of Paul's character were much more sophisticated and specific after they worked on the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" (Figure 9). This result is concurrent with observations from a study by Nancy B. Lester. Lester's study involved adult readers and a value ranking system much more involved and elaborate than our own. However, she concludes, "for these occasions [when the student may have been too close to or too distant from the character], and for these readers, a value analysis could provide a way for them to discuss a text without feeling uncomfortable if their values are involved or feeling inadequate if they have never had experiences similar to those provided in the text" (1982, 335).

In our activity students were given a sheet with a list of twenty-two possible values such as acceptance, achievement, aesthetics, altruism, autonomy, creativity, physical appearance, pleasure and wealth. Individually, they ranked the values in order from most important to Paul to least important to Paul. Later, in small groups, students compared their individual rankings and defended their choice of rankings by citing evidence from the story. One student was sure Paul valued physical appearance most, "After all, look at the fancy stuff he wore at the dean's hearing—the coat with the velvet collar, the opal stick pin, and the red carnation. And, then, what does he do the first thing in New York? He buys *silk underwear!*" A second student held out for wealth as a top value and cited Paul's conclusion, "It says right on page 178 that 'money was everything.' You can't make a stronger statement than that." A third student in the group mentioned acceptance as a value and offered the idea that Paul seemed to want acceptance by the opera star whom he followed to the hotel. Another group member, though, doubted this and seemed to remember contrary evidence in the story. After searching for a few moments, the passage in question came to light: " 'He had no especial desire to meet or to know any of these people; all he demanded was the right to look on and conjecture, to watch the pageant. The mere stage properties were all he contended for.' " Buttressed with this quote, the same group member volunteered, "Really, don't you think this could be used as evidence for physical appearance? It seems as if Paul only cares about appearance and never reality."

The students participating in the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" activity are reacting to Paul and his personality, but the structure of this activity has given them a specific vocabulary and point of reference for doing so. Instead of casting about in their minds for one or two options, the students have many values to weigh and from which to select. They may still be right in initially labeling Paul "a loser," but they are aware now that he appears this way to them due to his inability to distinguish appearance from reality. As Lester notes, having readers analyze a character's values "provides a key to elusive meaning. It enables students to see that meaning in a text is accessible to them as well as to the teacher, and that their responses are the first steps to disclosing that 'hidden meaning' " (1982, 336).

Students become engaged in this problem-solving activity because there is no obvious answer. In fact, good cases can be made for several top value choices. Ranking the values individually constitutes a vested interest for students. As they begin discussion in groups, controversy arises. Students begin to look for evidence from the text because they want to explain and defend their positions. They are less likely to accept uncritically any answer that is given. Furthermore, small group work helps students to search for the best answers independently because they cannot look to the teacher for constant confirmation of the "correct" answer.

The classroom activity immediately following the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" involves student debates. Students are divided into small groups again to take sides on the question, "Why does Paul commit suicide?" In preparing for the debates, students use their opinions of what Paul does and does not value to defend their positions. While discussion in this debate activity is more open-ended than in the "Literary Characters' Values Profile," students are prepared by the previous activity so that they are able to handle the new demands of the debate. Again, there is no readily apparent answer; students must utilize critical thinking and problem solving skills. The debate formalizes students' needs to explain and defend their positions. It also makes abundantly clear the immediate demands of audience. Discussions become heated as students debate whether Paul committed suicide because he lost touch with reality or because he valued wealth and did not have it or because he did not value morality and honesty. They become so heated in fact that they sometimes stop to admonish each other, "Hey, remember it's only a story!"

Activities of this kind may help create the instructional environment advocated by Applebee (1981) and the NAEP report (1981) because they encourage students to elaborate and defend their interpretations.

As students become involved in disagreements with each other about Paul's values, they develop an "audience" in addition to the teacher. A writing assignment that asks them to argue their viewpoint about what Paul values most or why he committed suicide may provide a natural follow-up to the class debates. The purpose in writing is to try to resolve a problem with which the class has been wrestling. The student has a purpose for writing beyond simply showing the teacher what he knows about "Paul's Case." When he knows his paper will be shared with and evaluated by classmates as well as the teacher, he may be more likely while writing to consider classmates' objections to his own theory about Paul and ways to refute these arguments in order to make his case stronger. Writing assignments, which grow out of actual problems and questions students have debated in class and which are read and evaluated in class by peers, may become a means for students to express their interpretations to fellow readers and writers rather than artificial exercises.

The activities explained in the Practice section are intended to serve as a model for activity design and sequencing that teachers can follow in creating materials to meet the needs and interests of their own students. We present the activities as they would be used with specific literary works in order to illustrate clearly the procedures and classroom dynamics. We have attempted to choose literary works or authors that are widely used in secondary English curricula, that represent various genres, and that encompass a range of levels of sophistication. The sequences are designed to help students interpret literature at higher levels and write effective compositions expressing their interpretations. We are not suggesting that the activities we present comprise a complete instructional unit for the literature included. We would expect them to be part of the instruction (such as study guides, vocabulary activities, audio-visual presentations, role playing, student productions, projects, and so forth), designed to guide students in understanding each work as a whole.

2 Practice

Supporting an Interpretation Sequence

In the activities in this sequence, students practice the skills Toulmin (1958) identifies as basic to argumentation: finding data to support a claim and linking the data and the claim with warrants. These skills were noted as particularly weak among the students assessed by the NAEP (1981). The activities in the sequence are based on the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee (1962) but could be easily adapted to work well with other literary works in which parenting is an issue or refocused for works dealing with other concepts. They are designed to prepare students to write a persuasive composition arguing whether or not a particular parent in the novel is characterized as a good parent. In preparation for this task, students work on interpreting simple implied relationships through examining specific examples of parental actions in the novel. This sequence appears first in the Practice section because the activities provide more data and structure for students than those in the next sequence. In addition, in the final writing assignment, students choose between two given positions (the character is or is not a good parent). In the next sequence, "Explicating Implied Relationships," students are given a more open-ended topic for which they must generate their own position statement.

The introductory activity in this sequence, "Ranking Scenarios," involves students in some serious thinking about the qualities of a good parent before they begin reading the novel. This activity provides a focus or purpose for reading: students seek to discover what they can about the relationships in the novel between parents and their children. In "Evidence Extract," students work on finding extensive evidence for an interpretation and making this evidence specific. The follow-up activity, "Warrant Workout," involves students in writing warrants linking their evidence and their interpretations. "Planning and Composing" guides students in generating their own persuasive essays.

Ranking Scenarios

This activity introduces students to some skills basic to argumentation—elaborating their reasoning for an audience and defending their views when challenged. It prepares them for later activities in which they must argue an interpretation about a literary character. In this sequence of activities, students will become involved in analyzing literary characters in order to determine whether they are characterized as good parents. Some students may tend to define a good parent as one who lets them do what they want, and from this perspective make hasty judgments about a literary character. "Ranking Scenarios" gets the student to do some serious thinking about the qualities that make a good parent and confront some viewpoints that may differ from his or her own before reading a work which deals with this concept. If the teacher explains his or her own definition of a good parent, the student may be reluctant to express his own ideas and may not actively engage in thinking about the problem. On the other hand, students seem more willing to challenge ideas on this subject expressed in debate with their peers.

The set of scenarios below, "What Makes a Good Parent?" illustrates how this kind of introductory activity is designed. The same technique can be used to design scenario sets to focus on other concepts in other literary works. To begin the activity, have students individually fill out Figure 1.

After students have completed their individual rankings, they should be divided into small groups of three to five students. With other group members they try to reach a consensus. This is not easy since there is no one obviously best system of ranking. As students try to convince other group members that they are "right," they must elaborate the reasons for their choices. One student will argue, for example, that Sue's parents are trying to protect her from getting in trouble. Another will find her parents overprotective and declare that Sue is too old to be told with whom she can and

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PARENT?

Rank the following situations from the one you think shows the BEST action of a parent (or parents) in raising a child to the WORST action of a parent(s) in raising a child. Below each situation explain your reasons for ranking each action as you did.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Best								Worst

A. Although Bill and his friends are only fifteen, they are able to get into "R" rated movies at a local theater without any questions asked. Bill's parents find out. They tell him he has been "breaking the law" and that he cannot accompany his friends to any more "R" rated movies.

B. Andy has a big history test for which he has not studied. So that he may study and take the exam later, his parents call the school and say he is sick.

C. Sue has just started attending a different high school. Her parents do not approve of several new friends she has brought home because they "act disrespectfully, use bad language, and ride motorcycles." Her parents say they are afraid of what will happen if Sue gets involved with the "wrong crowd" and tell her they do not want to see her with these "friends" again.

D. Four-year-old Jeffie always screams and cries when he has to go to nursery school. His mother tells him that if for a whole week he does not cry about going to nursery school, she will buy him a new toy.

E. Jenny works very hard to get B's in all her classes. Her parents tell her she should try harder and be more like her older brother, who always makes A's.

F. Patty's parents will not allow her to smoke cigarettes. She argues that since she is sixteen she should be allowed to smoke. Each of her parents smokes two packs of cigarettes a day.

G. Joe breaks a neighbor's window while playing baseball. His father "grounds" him for three weeks. Since Joe does not have enough money to pay for the damage, his father makes him work in the yard and around the house to earn the money.

H. Steve is driven home by the police because he was caught shoplifting. The police tell his parents that they will not arrest him this time but that he should be aware of the seriousness of what he has done. His parents decide not to punish him because "boys will be boys."

I. Marianne would be happy wearing inexpensive jeans to school. Her mother, a single parent, does not make much money, but she insists on buying Marianne very expensive, stylish clothes because she wants to be sure her daughter is in the "most popular group" at school.

Figure 1. What Makes a Good Parent?

cannot be friends. After the small groups complete their discussions, have the groups present their rankings to the whole class. At this point the debate begins again as groups defend their rankings against attack. As the debate continues, lead students to discussion of the qualities that make a good parent. As students generate ideas such as honesty, fairness, and good role modeling, list these on the board and have students copy them for future reference.

In this activity students can hardly avoid arguing a viewpoint and trying to persuade by explaining their reasons and challenging the reasons or logic of others. In addition, this kind of activity may result in more purposeful reading when students begin a novel such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They have something to look for—the attitudes, behavior, and motivation of the parents presented in the novel.

Evidence Extract

This activity focuses on the following skills: evaluating evidence to determine whether it is specific enough, revising "evidence" that is not specific, and generating good evidence on one's own. Building on the ideas about what makes a good parent discussed in the previous activity, it is designed to follow reading and discussion of Part 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A similar format can be used in dealing with many different short stories and novels.

Many students really do not understand what is meant when an assignment requests specific evidence. They often think that a statement such as, "Scout thinks Atticus treats her fairly," is good supporting evidence to show that Atticus is a good parent. The "Evidence Extract" is designed to help students learn to use specific quotations and details from a literary work as supporting evidence for their conclusions. It appears early in the sequence because students are given data to analyze rather than immediately asked to find evidence on their own.

Begin by giving students the following two statements:

> Atticus is honest and does not hide things from other people.
>
> Scout says that Atticus never did anything to her and Jem in the house that he did not do in the yard.

Ask students to explain what is different about the two statements. Which one is more specific? Why? What kind of statement is the other one? Summarize comments from this discussion about the difference between a conclusion and evidence for that conclusion. Show students that the second statement could also be written as a direct quotation: Scout says, "Atticus don't ever do anything to Jem and me in the house that he don't do in the yard."

Hand out Figure 2. Although this activity can be done individually by students, it usually works best in small, heterogeneous groups of three to five students so that group members can help each other and thus refine their answers.

After students have completed this assignment, assemble the class into a circle, or other similar seating arrangement, to discuss findings. Students begin to understand what makes good evidence as they present their ideas to the class and get responses from their peers. One group may say that "Atticus does not listen to just one 'side' of an argument" is specific evidence. Another group replies, "When does that happen? You need to tell more about it." The first group is then forced to be more specific as they relate the situation in which Uncle Jack jumps to conclusions without listening to Scout's side and Scout explains that Atticus always listens to both sides. Encourage groups to elaborate counter-arguments to refute the thesis which is opposite of their own.

To reinforce the skills introduced in this activity, have groups read aloud the evidence they wrote in Part E of Figure 2, and ask other students to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence presented. Or, that evidence could be put on dittos for students to evaluate in class the next day.

Warrant Workout

In their writing, students often omit warrants and assume that the evidence "speaks for itself." This activity, which focuses on writing warrants, builds on the previous activity because students now add warrants to their evidence.

Begin the activity by explaining the function of the warrant and the need for explaining how each piece of evidence supports the conclusion. Give students an example of a warrant such as the following:

> Claim: Atticus is characterized as a good parent.
>
> Evidence: Scout says that Atticus never did anything to her and Jem in the house that he didn't do in the yard.
>
> Warrant: According to Scout, Atticus treats his children just as well when he is out of the public

EVIDENCE EXTRACT

Students have been given the following assignment:

> At several points in *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Aunt Alexandra and Mrs. Dubose question Atticus' behavior as a parent and suggest that he lets his children "run wild." Think carefully about the events in Part I of the novel and state your viewpoint on the following issue:
>
> In *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Atticus is or is not characterized as a good parent.
>
> Then write five *specific* examples or details from the novel that support your viewpoint.

Read the two student papers and evaluate them in the following ways:

A. For each paper, identify any statements that you believe are incorrect or do *not* support the student's viewpoint. Explain the problems you find.

B. On each of the papers, which statements present specific evidence? Explain the reasons for your choices.

C. On each of the papers, which statements are *not* specific enough? Explain the reasons for your choices.

D. Select the paper that presents the viewpoint with which you agree. For that paper rewrite each statement that is not specific enough so that it is a good, specific example.

E. Write two additional examples that provide good, specific evidence to support your conclusion about whether or not Atticus is characterized as a good parent.

Figure 2. Evidence Extract.

Evidence Extract Jeff J.

Thesis: In To Kill a Mockingbird, Atticus is characterized as a good parent.

1. Scout remarks, "Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment" (p. 10).

2. Atticus does not listen to just one side of an argument (p. 90).

3. Atticus says that if he did not defend a black man he could not hold up his head in town or represent the county in the legislature (p. 80).

4. Atticus threatens Scout but does not hit her (p. 92).

5. Atticus compromises with Scout (p. 36).

Figure 2 continued.

Evidence Extract Susan B.

Thesis: In <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u>, Atticus is not characterized as a good parent.

1. Scout reports that according to Mrs. Dubose "it was quite a pity our father had not remarried after our mother's death. A lovelier lady than our mother never lived, she said, and it was heartbreaking the way Atticus Finch let her children run wild" (p. 104).

2. Atticus tells his children the meanings of bad words (p. 92).

3. Atticus makes Jem and Scout be nice to mean and disgusting people (pp. 108, 115-16).

4. Aunt Alexandra calls Atticus names and says he will ruin the family (p. 87).

5. At one point Scout is ashamed of her father because, as she says, "He worked in an office, not in a drugstore. Atticus did not drive a dump-truck for the county, he was not the sheriff, he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone" (p. 94).

Figure 2 continued.

> eye as he does when other people can see what he is doing. He is not two-faced and this is one quality that makes him a good parent.

Hand out the following evidence for which students must provide the claim and warrants (Figure 3).

After students have written warrants for each piece of evidence, lead a class discussion in which they present their warrants for the class to evaluate. As students work on warrants, they explicate the inferences they have made in deciding whether Atticus is characterized as a good parent. They must explain their inferences clearly and logically in order to convince a reader of their conclusions. Since the evidence listed could possibly be interpreted to support either side, students begin to understand why the evidence alone does not completely support their claims.

When students have reached a point at which they are writing effective warrants for their evidence, assign a persuasive essay arguing whether Atticus is or is not characterized as a good parent. In their papers students should use the evidence and warrants they have been writing as support for their conclusions.

Planning and Composing

This final writing assignment for the "Supporting an Interpretation" sequence asks students to argue their viewpoints about another parent in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They apply the skills they have practiced in order to convince a reader of their conclusions. From the writing, the teacher can evaluate students' progress toward mastery of these skills in order to determine the direction successive instruction should take.

Figure 4 illustrates the kind of assistance most students will need at this point to help them in their writing. Distribute the planning sheet, which begins with the assignment.

Students complete the planning sheet to prepare information to use in their drafts. If students plan their evidence before writing, they will be better able to look at their information and organize it for their drafts. Otherwise, they may be tempted to put evidence into their drafts in the order they think of it instead of considering how they might best organize their evidence. If a check on student progress seems necessary, have students evaluate and revise their completed sheets or drafts in class in pairs or in small groups.

In writing this paper, students apply skills they have practiced in the previous activities in a new situation in which they must analyze another parent in the novel. This time they must work more independently, find evidence on their own, evaluate whether their evidence is specific enough, and provide warrants in order to support their claims and persuade a reader to accept their conclusions.

After students have completed their writing, they may be interested in discussing their conclusions about Aunt Alexandra and how she contrasts with Atticus or with other parents in the novel (for instance, Robert Ewell and Mr. Radley). Ask students to look back at the scenarios in the first activity in this sequence and explain how they think the author would feel about each of these parents and what qualities she thinks are important for a parent to have.

Although some theorists consider structure of any kind inhibiting and artificial, the type of structure provided in these activities is designed to enhance student motivation and interaction. Students are not pushed to predetermined responses but encouraged to debate and refine the various ideas they have. Most preteens and teenagers are quite concerned about relationships with parents, motives for parental decisions, and parental fallibility. They have opinions about these issues and may even change some of their initial opinions as a result of this instruction. By the end of the sequence, they may conclude, for instance, that a parent's lying to the school to keep a son or daughter out of trouble is not as clever as they first thought.

Explicating Implied Relationships Sequence

One typical kind of assignment for secondary students is to write what is sometimes called a "character analysis." Such a task requires that students be able to interpret simple and complex implied relationships involving character and to translate their inferences into written products involving sophisticated arguments and counter-arguments, as well as to use evidence from the text(s). As the NAEP report (1981) indicates, secondary students have difficulty effectively performing such writing tasks.

This sequence of activities is designed to teach students the skills necessary to write effective compositions of this type. The first activity, the "Student Opinionnaire," is designed to prepare students for dealing with initial inferences involving character in what they will read and later write about. The next activity, "Inferring Emotions," utilizes photographs of people to help students practice making inferences involving characterization. The "What If . . . ? Character Questionnaire" is designed to help students make

WARRANT WORKOUT

I. State your viewpoint on the issue of whether Atticus is characterized as a good parent and briefly explain why you think so.

The following evidence could be used to argue either side of this issue. After thinking about how the other side would use this evidence, write a warrant for each that explains *how* this evidence supports *your* conclusion about Atticus as a parent.

A. Atticus says he has threatened to whip Scout but has never actually hit her.

B. When Scout uses profanity in front of Uncle Jack, Atticus tells him that if he doesn't pay any attention to her she'll get over this "stage."

C. When Scout says she is never going to school again, Atticus makes a compromise with her, saying, "If you'll concede the necessity of going to school, we'll go on reading every night just as we always have. . . . By the way, Scout, you'd better not say anything at school about our agreement."

D. Atticus allows Scout to wear overalls; Aunt Alexandra suggests that he should encourage her to wear dresses so that she will become a lady.

II. Look back at your answers in "Evidence Extract." Find the two pieces of new evidence you wrote on your own to support your viewpoint. Rewrite each of these examples and then write a warrant that explains how each supports your conclusion about Atticus.

Figure 3. Warrant Workout.

PLANNING SHEET

In Part 2 of *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Aunt Alexandra moves in with the Finches to serve as a mother figure for Jem and Scout. After reading Part 2, what is your viewpoint on the following issue: Aunt Alexandra is or is not characterized as a good parent. Write a persuasive essay arguing your viewpoint on this issue.

Thesis (State your viewpoint on the above issue and briefly explain your reasons):

Organization	Evidence	Warrants

Conclusion:

Look at your evidence/warrants and the order of the reasons in your thesis. Place numbers in the organization column to indicate the order of your evidence/warrants as they should appear in your paper.

Figure 4. Planning Sheet.

initial inferences about a major character and practice skills essential to explicating inferences in written discourse. In the "Literary Characters' Values Profile," students work with complex implied relationships and refine their argumentation skills. In a follow-up activity, students practice organizing arguments and evidence from the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" in preparation for a final writing assignment. In the character debate activity, students learn how to refute opposing arguments. The final activity asks students to pull together all that they have learned and practiced by writing an extended comparison and contrast of two major characters. Before students turn in compositions, they evaluate their peers' rough drafts as a final check. While doing one or two of the activities outlined in the sequence might provide an interesting change of pace, this will probably not be enough for most students to master the skills described above (Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter 1982).

Most of the activities contain suggested short follow-up writing assignments which are designed to give students additional practice and serve as a means for the teacher to check on student progress. Three works are utilized as examples in the sequence: Louis L'Amour's *Sackett,* Ernest Haycox's "A Question of Blood," and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar.* We also explain how the activities can be used with various types of literature and how students can be guided through a single work or longer unit.

Student Opinionnaire

For literary works which seem far removed from students' life experiences, many teachers feel that telling students about the author, about historical background, or a bit about the story before they begin reading helps students with reading problems and motivates them to read. However, Rosenblatt argues that this approach often puts the students' focus on "much that is irrelevant and distracting" (1968, 27). An alternative approach we have used is the opinionnaire activity. This approach is designed to foster, what Rosenblatt calls, "fruitful . . . transactions between individual readers and individual literary works" (1968, 26–27). This type of introductory activity is based on the idea that students have opinions about various subjects; it uses those opinions to create interest in a work and helps with problems students will encounter in trying to interpret complex implied relationships involving character, which students will have to write about.

A successful opinionnaire typically contains seven to twenty statements, depending upon the length and difficulty of the work, the focus of instruction, and the age and ability level of students. The statements are keyed to specific interpretive problems and ask students to make a response of either agreement or disagreement (or either true or false) for each statement. Figure 5 is designed for use with Louis L'Amour's western novel *Sackett,* but it is easily adaptable to instructional sequences which focus on Western or frontier literature, or individual works such as Twain's *Roughing It,* Rolvaag's *Giants in The Earth,* Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales,* Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky," and Schaefer's *Shane.*

The first step in using the opinionnaire is to distribute it to the class, perhaps the day before they start reading. Once students have completed it on their own, lead a class discussion focusing on each statement, and encourage students to express their opinions and to challenge the opinions of others. For example, when a student agrees with statement 8, encourage him or her to explain why. The response is usually something like, "John Wayne would never shoot a man in the back!" Others often respond with, "Anyone who believes that has watched too many Western movies!" Encourage other students to explain and argue their responses, but provide synthesis and direction as the need arises. Because the statements require students to take a stand, this activity ensures a lively discussion.

After the class has gone over all of the statements, point out that the statements deal with aspects of a major character in the novel and that they should keep them in mind as they read. In subsequent discussions and activities on the book, refer to how students responded to statements on the opinionnaire and compare their responses to what they actually find in their reading. The statements are also designed to link students' attitudes and opinions about cowboys, gunfighters, and the Old West to how these things are presented in the novel. For example, many students mark the first statement as "true," but after reading the first few pages, they learn that the major character, Tell Sackett, has a reputation as a gunfighter. However, he is neither proud of it nor does he seek to fight or kill others to improve his reputation. In other words, the purpose behind this statement is to help students deal with stereotyped views they may have about gunfighters, as well as prepare them for understanding the character of Tell and issues with which

OLD WEST OPINIONNAIRE

In the space provided mark each statement true or false.

		T or F
1.	Most gunfighters in the Old West wanted to kill other men in gunfights to gain reputations as mean or tough men.	_____
2.	Most gunfighters were lawless and took what they wanted when they wanted it, ignoring the rules of society.	_____
3.	A gun was an essential tool for survival in the Old West.	_____
4.	Most people who came out west after 1864 were seeking freedom and a place to settle down and raise a family.	_____
5.	Being able to read was not a necessary skill in the Old West, so few people even bothered to learn.	_____
6.	The family was not important to the cowboys of the Old West.	_____
7.	Most cowboys had no desire to settle down and raise a family.	_____
8.	Cowboys never shot people in the back; they always faced an enemy head-on in a fair, quick-draw fight.	_____
9.	If people ran into trouble in the West, they could always depend on the law to settle troublesome matters.	_____
10.	Few people helped other people in the Old West; it was pretty much every person for himself or herself.	_____
11.	At the first sign of trouble, men with reputations as gunfighters "shot first and asked questions later."	_____

Figure 5. Old West Opinionnaire.

he must deal. Since one way L'Amour builds the character of Tell is by playing against the stereotype of the Western gunfighter, many of the statements on the sheet relate to these aspects of Tell's character.

Figure 6, an opinionnaire designed for Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar,* illustrates another way that the activity encourages discussion and helps students prepare for the literary work they are about to read.

In marking their answers, students, without realizing it, often contradict themselves. For example, some students agree with statements 1 and 3. As the discussion develops, however, students often realize (on their own or as a result of their peers pointing it out) that they have a contradiction in thought. It is not uncommon for one student to tell another, "How can you say it is all right to kill an evil political leader when you just got through saying it is wrong to kill another person!"

This activity serves as a first step in closing the gap between students' experiences and the experience of a literary work. An interesting variation of the activity is to put students in small groups and have them try to arrive at a consensus before the whole class discussion. Not only does this ensure more student participation, but it often encourages an even livelier and more fruitful discussion.

Inferring Emotions

This activity is designed to give students practice in making inferences and gathering data. It is a preliminary activity because it uses pictures to prepare students to make inferences about a character in a work of fiction.

In preparation for this activity, the teacher needs to assemble a set of nine to twelve close-up photographs of people who exhibit various emotions such as anger, fear, suspicion, embarrassment, contentment, and so on. Good sources for appropriate photographs are the *National Geographic, The Family of Man* by Edward Steichen (Museum of Modern Art: New York, 1955), and any of the books in the *Stop, Look, and Write* series particularly the volume entitled *The Writer's Eye* by H. D. Leavitt (New York: Bantam Books, 1976). (The following pages of *The Writer's Eye,* without their captions, are excellent for this activity: 21, 30, 40, 55, 63, 90, 103, 104, 119, and 160.)

After the class observes three or four photographs, list on the board six to eight emotions that seem to be suggested by people in the photographs. Then, direct a class discussion in which students choose an emotion which best describes each picture and explain which details in each photograph have led them to their conclusions. Encourage students to go beyond the obvious and pick out more subtle details. By matching photographs with emotions, students make inferences from details. As they identify and explain which details show each emotion, they gather supporting data for the inferences they are making.

Once students have the idea, divide the class into small groups. Have each group examine a new photograph and write a paragraph which identifies the emotion expressed and uses four to six details from the photograph to support its conclusion. Compositions may be collected and returned later.

As a check, we often collect the photographs and paragraphs, and after redistributing the paragraphs to other groups, we have each group read a composition aloud and try to match it with the correct photograph. Once all compositions have been correctly matched with photographs, we lead a brief discussion in which the class identifies the most effective compositions and explains which details best support the emotions identified. Also, for weaker compositions, we ask the class to explain how these might be improved. Before groups return paragraphs to the authors for revision, we have each group note at the bottom of the composition which details helped them match the paragraph with the correct picture and which were confusing or did not help.

At this point in the activity, students have gone through the process of making inferences, gathering supporting data, and writing an analysis. In addition, the discussion after the small group activity gives students peer feedback on their writing and inductively leads students through the process of evaluating conclusions and assessing the quality of the supporting evidence they gathered.

As follow-up writing practice, show the class another photograph and have each student write a paragraph stating the emotion the person in the photograph is expressing and giving at least four details which support that emotion.

What If . . . ? Character Questionnaire

The purpose of this activity is to give students practice in interpreting simple and complex implied relationships. From their initial inferences students gather and select data and explain how data support a conclusion about a major character. While "Inferring Emotions" utilized a visual medium to help students practice

POLITICS, PATRIOTISM, AND PROTEST OPINIONNAIRE

In the space provided mark whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

		agree or disagree
1.	It is never right to kill another person.	_____
2.	Political leaders usually act in the best interest of their countries.	_____
3.	If a political leader has done something wrong, it is all right to get rid of him or her by whatever means necessary.	_____
4.	"Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."	_____
5.	In certain situations it may be justified for a political leader to bend or break the law for the good of the country.	_____
6.	People should never compromise their ideals or beliefs.	_____
7.	"My country right or wrong" is not just a slogan; it is every citizens' patriotic duty.	_____
8.	No cause, political or otherwise, is worth dying for.	_____
9.	"Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant taste of death but once."	_____
10.	"The evil that men do lives after them; the good is [often buried] with their bones."	_____

Figure 6. Politics, Patriotism, and Protest Opinionnaire.

making inferences and gathering data, this activity is more difficult because students analyze a text.

As discussed in the Theory and Research section, one reason class discussion of literary works, especially initial discussions, may fail to elicit much student response is that questions may be beyond student capabilities or skill levels. As a result, students feel intimidated by the questions and are afraid to respond. However, the format of this activity, that of multiple-choice questions, obviates this problem. Virtually all students are familiar and most feel comfortable with the multiple-choice format. In addition, this format gives students a place to start in making initial inferences, and, therefore, they are less likely to become fearful and fail to respond in small group or whole class discussions.

The ten to twenty questions contained on a typical questionnaire all focus on a major character. The questions are designed to take the character out of the context of the story and put him or her in new situations. However, students are to make their choices based on evidence from the text. The questionnaire in Figure 7 is designed for use with Louis L'Amour's *Sackett*. This activity may be easily adapted for other literary works.

This questionnaire is best used when students have finished or are nearly finished reading the novel. Have students complete it on the basis of their understanding of the character. Then, divide the class into small groups and have students try to reach a consensus on their answers. This will usually not be a simple task since the multiple-choice questions are not designed in a typical fashion. No *one* answer is *the* correct answer for a given question. For most questions, several of the possible answers might be reasonably defended as good answers. They are deliberately designed in this manner to create disagreement so that students actively engage in making inferences, gathering and selecting data, and explaining evidence as they argue their choices. The following transcript of one small group's discussion of question 1 illustrates this process.

> Martha: Maybe PE because he beat everybody he wrestled when he was a kid.
>
> Laura: No. I think English would be his favorite subject.
>
> Pete: Well, why?
>
> Laura: He wants to learn to read better.
>
> Martha: Yeah, like when he said he is ashamed because . . . here on page four he "couldn't read enough to get the sense out of a letter."
>
> Pete: But that doesn't prove he wants to read better. It just says he's ashamed that he can't.
>
> Laura: Yes it does. Look at page thirty. When he looks at the books in his ma's house it says he felt "a longing . . . to read them all."
>
> Pete: Yeah, he wants to learn how to read and that's English.
>
> Gilbert: I think you're all wrong. It's history.
>
> Pete: Oh, no!
>
> Gilbert: Sure, he wants to improve himself, but the book he tries to read is that history-law book by Blackstone. And he's always talking about history—his family or the places he goes. He even starts saying things right out of the book when they're talking about building a town.

The group began with two possible answers, physical education and English. In order to make a decision, the group had to go to the text for evidence. After considering additional evidence and warrants, Pete pushed for even more. Laura found new evidence and expanded her warrant, and the group decided on English. They later refined their answer even further, to history, after considering new evidence and Gilbert's rebuttal of the English argument.

The group discussion illustrates another important aspect of the design of the activity. The question asks students to consider the character in a situation with which they are familiar, subjects in school. This familiarity helps bridge the gap between students' life experiences and that of the literary work. In addition, familiarity helps encourage response in the discussions.

At the conclusion of the small group discussion, have the students reconvene as an entire class. Go over each of the questions, and have them explain the reasoning for their answers. Some disagreements may arise during the discussion; let students debate back and forth and draw their own conclusions based on evidence from the book. Many of the questions are keyed to statements on the "Student Opinionnaire," the introductory activity (Figure 5). During the discussion, or as a means of summarizing what students have learned about the main character, refer to students' responses on the opinionnaire. Examine how and why their opinions may have changed. For example, question 5 (Reading was not necessary, so people in the Old West did not bother to learn how) on the opinionnaire (Figure 5) is keyed to question 1 (Sackett's favorite subject in school) on the questionnaire (Figure 7). Students will now realize as a result of

WHAT IF TELL SACKETT . . .?

Read each of the following statements and circle the letter that best completes the statement in terms of what you think would fit the character of Tell Sackett. Be prepared to defend your answers with reasoning based on evidence from the book.

1. Sackett's favorite course in school would be
   A. English.
   B. physical education.
   C. history/social studies.
   D. biology.
2. On a typical date Tell would take his date to
   A. a rock-folk music concert.
   B. a wrestling match.
   C. a dance.
   D. the opera.
3. Sackett would live
   A. in an apartment in the city.
   B. in a house in the suburbs.
   C. on a farm.
   D. with no permanent address.
4. If Sackett met Adolf Hitler, he would
   A. shoot him on sight.
   B. scold him.
   C. praise him.
   D. ignore him.
5. If Sackett were at a wedding, he would
   A. be the best man.
   B. be the groom.
   C. drink too much at the wedding party and kiss the bride numerous times.
   D. sit quietly during the ceremony and turn red when he had to kiss the bride.
6. If Tell were alive today, his job or profession would most likely be
   A. mechanic.
   B. lawyer.
   C. police officer.
   D. farmer.
7. Sackett would most admire
   A. Babe Ruth.
   B. John Wayne.
   C. Martin Luther King.
   D. Elvis Presley.
8. If Sackett took a vacation today, he would most likely travel to
   A. New York City.
   B. Alaska.
   C. the Amazon jungles.
   D. Miami Beach.
9. If people started a campaign today to elect Sackett mayor, he would
   A. gladly accept.
   B. try to talk them into running his brother Orrin.
   C. refuse to run for office.
   D. bribe people for their votes.
10. At a football game Tell would
    A. be a quiet fan.
    B. be a quarterback.
    C. sell peanuts.
    D. sit near the bench and harass the players and coaches.
11. Today, Sackett's favorite hobby would most likely be
    A. jogging.
    B. reading poetry.
    C. stamp collecting.
    D. carpentry.

Figure 7. What if Tell Sackett . . . ?

their reading and discussion how and why reading was an important skill to people on the frontier.

A questionnaire on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (Figure 8) illustrates two other aspects of the activity.

First, question 3 illustrates the ease with which questions can be modified to go with other works, since this question is very similar to question 9 on Figure 7. More importantly, since the questions take students outside the experience of a work, students feel more at ease in sharing what Judith A. Langer calls "novel responses" to literature. This activity encourages students, as she says, to "explore, defend, or elaborate their more unique ideas" (1982, 339). For example, in discussing question 1, many students make connections between the political events in the play and more recent political events. For other students the characters come alive as they make connections between characters in the play and historical figures named in various questions.

As a follow-up writing practice, have students select one of the questions and write a paragraph explaining which of the answers would best fit the character and why. Stress the use of evidence from the text.

Literary Characters' Values Profile

This activity builds on the inferential skills students have practiced in the "What If . . . ? Questionnaire." Coming later in the sequence, however, it requires increasing sophistication on the part of the students. In the "What If . . . ? Questionnaire," students practice making initial inferences concerning a character; each question is designed to focus on a single aspect of character. In the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" (Figure 9), students are given a list of values which they rank for a character in a story. Making this ranking requires students to interpret complex implied relationships from various pieces of information in the story. They must consider and weigh many different possibilities. In making their choices and later arguing them with peers, students practice supporting their claims with evidence from the story.

Give students the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" (Figure 9).

Go over the values and ask students if they are unfamiliar with the meanings of any of them. Meanings can be discussed and noted in the appropriate column on the activity sheet. Next, direct students to rank the values for a specific character in order from most important to the character (1) to least important to the character (22). Or, as a variation on this procedure, have students rank only the top five (1–5) and bottom five (18–22) values for the character. This is often a more appropriate option for a short story in which there is not a great deal of character development. A second variation of the activity is possible if a character changes during the course of the work. In this case, have students rank values for a character both before and after his or her change. The range of choices in this activity's design makes it potentially useful for any literary work with a complex character.

Giving students a specific task like this with many choices allows them to consider more options to an answer than they might consider on their own. With something concrete in front of them from which to start, students become personally engaged in the question of what the character values most and are less likely to accept any answer uncritically.

After students have completed their individual rankings, place them in heterogeneous groups to compare their ideas. For the activity to work well, the character in question must be complex enough to have more than one potential top value. For instance, some students will select wealth as Tell Sackett's top value since he sees the gold mine as the answer to his prayers and since he risks the lives of those whom he cares about in its pursuit. Other students, however, argue that Sackett values altruism the most and that wealth for him is only a means to an end. In the same way, students will differ on Brutus's highest value, which some students will see as altruism, citing his decision to kill Caesar for the good of Rome. Others select morality as his highest value. After all, they argue, he is the man who will never compromise his standards of what he considers right and wrong. In either case, students have found specific and concrete ways to talk about the actions and motives of the major characters and they have practiced the skills of making and supporting claims.

After reaching consensus in their small groups, students finally debate their ideas in a whole class discussion. As the various groups compare answers, discussion should be at a high level because of the students' preliminary work. Students have progressed from making their own decisions independently to refining those ideas and challenging others in groups and finally to debating conclusions with the whole class.

As a follow-up writing activity to the "Literary Characters' Values Profile," Figure 10 helps students to formalize and put into writing the processes they have been going through orally in class discussion. After completion of the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" (Figure 9), give students Figure 10. They should fill out the sheet for the character whom they

WHAT IF BRUTUS . . .?

Read each of the following statements and circle the letter that best completes the statement in terms of what you think would fit the character of Brutus. Be prepared to defend your answers with reasoning based on evidence from the play.

1. If Brutus had been a general in Adolf Hitler's Secret Service, he would have
   A. waited until the right opportunity and then shot Hitler.
   B. hired someone to assassinate Hitler.
   C. worked to overthrow Hitler.
   D. praised Hitler.
2. If Brutus were at a baseball game, he would
   A. be a pitcher.
   B. be an umpire.
   C. sit quietly and enjoy the game.
   D. sit near the opposing team's dugout and harass players, coaches, and umpires.
3. If people started a campaign today to elect Brutus president, he would
   A. pretend that he didn't want to run.
   B. try to talk them into running a better candidate.
   C. make deals with other political leaders to make sure that he won the election.
   D. refuse to run.
4. Today if Brutus were at a large family picnic he would most likely
   A. go off by himself, sit under a tree, and read a book.
   B. organize and participate in contests and games.
   C. stand around and sulk until someone asked him to participate in the activities.
   D. have long talks with anyone who might give the family a bad name.
5. Brutus would most admire
   A. George Washington.
   B. General George Patton.
   C. Jack the Ripper.
   D. the Beatles.
6. In school Brutus's favorite course would be
   A. philosophy.
   B. English.
   C. political science.
   D. speech.
7. If Brutus were alive today, he would most likely live
   A. in a mansion.
   B. in a monastery.
   C. in an apartment.
   D. on a farm.
8. Brutus would probably most enjoy a social gathering of
   A. close friends.
   B. family.
   C. Hollywood film stars.
   D. college professors.
9. Today, Brutus's favorite hobby would most likely be
   A. listening to music.
   B. playing cards.
   C. travel.
   D. reading.
10. If Brutus were alive today, his job or profession would probably be
    A. computer programmer.
    B. used car salesman.
    C. sports announcer.
    D. lawyer or judge.
11. Brutus's favorite type of television program would be
    A. detective show.
    B. soap opera.
    C. game show.
    D. situation comedy.

Figure 8. What if Brutus . . . ?

LITERARY CHARACTERS' VALUES PROFILE

Character:

Rank the values in order from most important to the character to least important to the character. If the character's values change, then rank the values both before and after the change.

_____ 1. Acceptance (approval from others)

_____ 2. Achievement

_____ 3. Aesthetics

_____ 4. Altruism

_____ 5. Autonomy

_____ 6. Companionship (friendship)

_____ 7. Creativity

_____ 8. Health

_____ 9. Honesty

_____ 10. Justice

_____ 11. Knowledge

_____ 12. Love

_____ 13. Loyalty

_____ 14. Morality

_____ 15. Physical Appearance

_____ 16. Pleasure

_____ 17. Power

_____ 18. Recognition

_____ 19. Religious Faith

_____ 20. Self-Respect

_____ 21. Skill

_____ 22. Wealth

Figure 9. Literary Characters' Values Profile.

LITERARY CHARACTERS' VALUES PROFILE ACTIVITY SHEET

Character:

A. Thesis: Explain what the character values most.
or
Explain the character's change in values.

B. What are the character's top three values? (If a change occurs, also list the top three after the change.)

C. Give evidence for the top value. (If there is a change, give evidence separately for the top value both before and after.)

D. In a sentence or two, explain *how* the evidence in C supports your thesis.

E. Give evidence to show that 2 and 3 are less important than 1.

F. In a sentence or two, explain *how* the evidence in E supports your point.

Figure 10. Literary Characters' Values Profile Activity Sheet.

have analyzed in the previous activity. The completed worksheet could well serve as an outline for a short theme before students go on to other activities and the final assignment in this sequence. Students should be instructed to retain the completed sheet for use in conjunction with the final assignment in the sequence.

The Great Character Debates

This activity is designed to serve two important purposes. First, it reinforces the skills students learned in the "Literary Characters' Values Profile" activities since students must apply these skills in analyzing another character. Second, the activity helps students develop an important skill necessary in effectively arguing a position in writing or speaking: refuting opposing viewpoints. The problem, of course, is not just that students lack such skills. It seems that no matter how we explain to students the reasons they need to refute other viewpoints, they seem puzzled at our requests and resort to the common reply, "Well, it's just *my* opinion!" The debate format requires students to attend to refutation or rebuttal in attempting to prove to a real audience (their peers) that one value is a character's most important and that it remains so throughout a work or that by the end one or another value has become most important.

Although this activity is easily adaptable for most works of literature, selecting appropriate characters is an important factor in ensuring its success. For example, in *Julius Caesar,* Mark Antony is a good character to use for the debate. Many minor characters lack enough depth to provide much for students to debate. If, for example, students have worked on the character of Tell Sackett in the previous activities, no other characters in the novel really offer much for students to debate. Therefore, as a follow-up to *Sackett,* we often have students read Ernest Haycox's "A Question of Blood" (a Western short story), and have students debate which of Frank Isabel's values is his most important, or, given that his values change, which value becomes most important to Isabel by the end of the story.

On a slip of paper, we have students write their names and what they think Isabel's (or if we're studying *Julius Caesar,* Mark Antony's) most important value is or becomes. We collect the slips of paper and then, as much as possible, assign students to small groups based on their selections. We give the groups time to find evidence to support their positions, with emphasis on preparing rebuttal arguments for one or more of the other possible viewpoints. The next step is to pit the groups against one another. Several groups often choose to argue similar viewpoints, so pairing groups with clearly opposing positions is important for the debate. For the character of Frank Isabel, one debate might pit an "autonomy" group against an "acceptance" group while two other groups might debate "autonomy" vs. "companionship" as his most important value. "Love," "justice," and "morality" are also possible values students might debate for this character.

We have the two groups who are debating go to the front of the class and face each other for the contest. The first group is given about three minutes to present its case or position. The second group is given the same amount of time to present its case. After this step, we give the groups a few minutes to prepare additional rebuttal arguments and evidence, and then each group has a chance to refute the other group's position. At the conclusion of the debate, have the class discuss which group won the debate and why, with particular attention to how well each group refuted the other group's arguments and evidence. Have members of the class suggest how the groups could have improved their positions—what other arguments, counter-arguments, and evidence they could have used to defend their positions.

The character debates involve students in the process of refuting opposing views; they experience the need to convince a real audience, their opponents and the class, of their viewpoints. For example, in debating the most important value of Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar,* a class might start with five possible values as most important: "justice," "power," "wealth," "loyalty," and "altruism." As the debates proceed and students actively engage in presenting a viewpoint and refuting another, they begin to realize that if they are going to convince others that, for instance, loyalty is his most important value, they have to refute the other possibilities. By the end of the debates and follow-up discussions, classes often have the values narrowed down to one or two strong possibilities such as "power" and "wealth." The debates enable students to draw sophisticated conclusions about the characters who are the focus of the debates.

As follow-up writing practice, have each student write a brief analysis of one of the debates (of which he or she was *not* a part). Each student should determine which group won the debate based on the quality of arguments, use of evidence, and refutation of the other group's position.

Putting It All Together

The previous activities have taken students step-by-step through the skills necessary to write a composition interpreting complex implied relationships. The goal of instruction is for students to apply their knowledge to a new situation. This activity asks students to apply in this culminating writing situation the knowledge and skills they have learned. The information they have gathered in previous activities becomes the basis for students' compositions.

The assignment involves students' comparing and contrasting the characters they have worked with in previous activities. For example, one possible assignment is to ask students to write a composition in which they compare and contrast the values of Tell Sackett and Frank Isabel to determine which would make the better father and why. Or, for *Julius Caesar,* students compare and contrast the values of Brutus and Antony to determine which would make the better leader and why.

Utilizing the information they have gathered about the characters (as well as new information as needed), students fill out the planning sheet in Figure 11 to aid them in writing a rough draft.

Students bring their rough drafts to class and critique in small groups, pairs, or individually their peers' compositions. They should use questions such as the following as a guide. The questions might be put on a ditto or simply written on the board for students to refer to while they evaluate other students' papers. This gives students a chance to help their peers through constructive critiques. Rather than a general, "all purpose" set of questions, these are tailored specifically to assess the skills needed for writing an extended explication of this type. Thus, the questions are designed to pinpoint specific strengths and weaknesses in a student's work.

1. Does the paper identify in the opening paragraph which character would make the better leader (or father) based on the values of each?
2. Does the composition include arguments to prove which character would make the better leader (father)?
3. How effective are the arguments?
4. Does the essay contain enough evidence to support the arguments?
5. How well does the evidence support the arguments?
6. Does the composition contain warrants?
7. How effective are the warrants?
8. Does the essay contain arguments, evidence, and warrants to refute the opposing view?
9. Is the paper clearly written and understandable?
10. Overall, how effective is the composition?
11. How might the composition be improved?

Collect rough drafts and redistribute them among students. Give students time to read and answer the questions for the papers they are evaluating. After being critiqued, papers and answers should be returned to the authors for final revisions.

In follow-up work on *Sackett* or *Julius Caesar,* to introduce students to the next level on the taxonomy, focus on relating these complex character relationships to the authors' generalizations: What comment or generalization does L'Amour make about the role of the family in the Old West? What comment or generalization does Shakespeare make about rebellion?

Analyzing Author's Generalization Sequence

The purpose of this sequence is to have students learn the skills necessary for writing compositions concerning authors' generalizations. As such, activities within this sequence involve reading skills at the level of author's generalization. Since dealing with author's generalization questions requires that students be able to interpret simple and complex implied relationships, teachers need to determine—either through reading inventories or previous instruction—whether students are ready for instruction at this level. Even if they are, it is likely that work at this level, especially when dealing with novels or plays, would be preceded by discussion and work at less complex levels and would be accompanied by vocabulary instruction, study guides, and other activities.

There are two major writing assignments and several smaller ones suggested in connection with the activities of the sequence. Parallel to the reading skills, there is also an increased sophistication of writing skills. In the "Supporting an Interpretation Sequence," students select one of two possible claims, character X either is or is not a good parent, as a thesis statement. In the "Analyzing Author's Generalization Sequence," students generate their own claims. In doing so, students additionally use skills which they

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Thesis: (Which character would make a better _____?)

Values of the character who *would not* be the better _____.
(with evidence and warrants)

Values of the character who *would* be the better _____.
(with evidence and warrants)

Explanation of reasons the second character discussed would be a better _____ than the first.

Figure 11. Putting It All Together.

developed earlier such as writing warrants and finding and evaluating evidence.

In this sequence, literary works focusing on romantic love and marriage relationships have been chosen in order to provide continuity and encourage sophisticated analysis. Through in-depth focus on a concept such as this one, students develop greater precision and perception in interpreting authors' generalizations. The activities lead students to increased sophistication as they progress from interpreting fables to interpreting more complex literary forms such as poems, a novel, and short stories. The last three activities, which focus on *The Great Gatsby,* together form a set of instructions preparing students to write an essay interpreting an author's generalization in a lengthy work.

Romantic Love/Marriage Survey

This activity begins an instructional sequence in which students interpret and write about authors' generalizations in selected works concerning love and marriage. As with the "Student Opinionnaire" introductory activity in the previous sequence, this activity utilizes student opinions to create interest in the concept that is the focus of the sequence. More importantly, the survey format, in requiring students to gather, compile, and then discuss opinions about fifteen different views of love, introduces and prepares them for the various authors' generalizations they will encounter and write about. In addition, the wide range of views represented on the survey provides an important link for the fables, poems, novel, and short stories in the sequence. Often, asking students which statement on the survey is closest to an author's viewpoint helps them better conceptualize a particular author's generalization. Also, asking students how their own views may have changed after reading a work or works has another important benefit; it helps students better understand how their own views may have been affected as a result of their study of romantic love or marriage relationships.

Students should be given the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" (Figure 12) several days prior to class discussion and tabulation. Pass out the survey in class and go over the procedures for having students conduct the survey outside class.

On the appropriate day, students should bring their completed surveys to class. Tabulation is probably easier to accomplish in a three-step process. First, ask students to add up their totals for each statement. Next, divide the class into sections by group or by row. Appoint one person in each group to compile group totals. On the board or on an overhead transparency, list each statement. After each statement is read, the student spokesman for each group will report the group statistics for that item. Other students can be working on adding the group totals for the entire class. (Calculators might be handy if students have them.) When you have your totals, ask students to analyze the results. Are they surprised by any of the results? Are there definite trends which can be identified? Did different age groups respond differently to the statements?

By compiling the survey findings in class, all students can contribute to class discussion in a nonthreatening situation. The amount of participation is high at this point as students spot trends and concur or take exception with the results. Although most teenagers think they have a pretty good idea of what "love" is, throwing out the discussion question, "What is love?" is a sure conversation stopper for most teenagers—as well as most adults. "The Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" activity circumvents this problem by asking students to respond to specific statements about love and to survey others outside the class as well. Through the survey, students examine and consider their own points of view about love as well as the viewpoints of others. Many of the clichés about love which many students accept without question are challenged.

Besides the activity's usefulness in this sequence, it can be used with other works such as *Romeo and Juliet* which have love as a central concept. Of course, the survey format could be adapted for use with other concepts since in any instructional sequence an introductory survey such as this gives students a chance to examine generalizations about a topic. Because it provides students with a general frame of reference for examining the attitudes of authors whom they will be reading, the survey makes students' reading more purposeful. As students begin their reading, direct them to ask themselves: How would the poet answer the survey? or, How would a main character in the story, novel, or play answer the survey?

Romantic Love/Marriage Fables

After discussion of the opinions of classmates and others on the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey," the next step is for students to analyze literary works to determine various writers' viewpoints and insights about love and marriage relationships. But, as the

ROMANTIC LOVE/MARRIAGE SURVEY

Answer the questions yourself, then survey nine other people. Survey three freshmen (indicate age as Fr.), three seniors (indicate age as Sr.), and three adults (indicate age as Ad.). Ask each person whether he or she agrees (a) or disagrees (d) with each of the statements about love. Keep track of each person's response to each item on this sheet by placing an *x* in the appropriate box for each response. Do not poll anyone else in this class. Do not poll anyone who has already responded to this survey.

This survey is due _____.

Responder	you		#2		#3		#4		#5		#6		#7		#8		#9		#10		Total	
Age																						
	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d
1. Love means never having to say you're sorry.																						
2. Teenagers cannot experience "true" love.																						
3. No one is ever too young to fall in love.																						
4. It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.																						
5. Love at first sight is possible.																						
6. Love is blind.																						
7. Love never changes.																						
8. Physical attraction must precede true love.																						
9. If you're really in love, physical appearance doesn't matter.																						
10. You can't expect a person to change his or her habits after marriage.																						
11. In love relationships, "opposites attract."																						

Figure 12. Romantic Love/Marriage Survey.

Responder	you		#2		#3		#4		#5		#6		#7		#8		#9		#10		Total	
Age																						
	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d	a	d
12. If someone does not return your affection, the best thing to do is to keep trying to change his or her mind.																						
13. You have to work at love.																						
14. For the most part, being in love is "a pain in the neck."																						
15. If you truly love someone, you will not be attracted to anyone else.																						

Figure 12 continued.

results of the NAEP indicate, interpreting authors' generalizations is difficult for secondary students. Hillocks's taxonomy suggests that it is difficult because before the reader can make interpretations at this level, he must be able to attend to significant details and understand many stated and implied relationships. The longer and more sophisticated the literature, the more difficult this task becomes. Students often have trouble just understanding what is meant by the term "author's generalization" or even a definition such as *what the author is showing about human nature or the human condition.* Giving students the definition and examples does not ensure that they will be able to perform this skill when they read a literary work. Beginning instruction with fables before approaching more complex works such as short stories or poems is a good way to help students understand what an author's generalization is. In fables, the author's generalization, or moral, is often explicitly stated or, if it is not, is less subtle than in other forms of literature. (If a fable contains an explicitly stated moral that appears on the copy students are given, then a question about what the moral is would not be classified as author's generalization because it is at the literal level.)

In this activity, through developing morals for fables, students practice stating authors' generalizations and supporting their conclusions. Begin the activity by asking students what they know about fables and how they are written. Then hand out the romantic love fable and questions (Figure 13). Notice that the moral has been omitted and that the fable is not one which is widely known.

Lead a class discussion focusing on these questions, and as students present various possible morals, have a volunteer list these on the blackboard or overhead projector. As students debate which statement of the moral is best, encourage them to provide evidence from the text for support.

Once students have reached agreement or all views have been thoroughly debated, they are ready to work more independently in generating morals for other romantic love fables. Hand out Figure 14.

In small, heterogeneous groups of three to five, students work together to write a moral for each fable. As group members propose different morals, students consider various possibilities and go back to the text to evaluate each. They weigh choices of wording in attempting to state clearly what they mean.

After all groups have completed this step, a student from each group puts on the blackboard or an overhead transparency the moral his or her group wrote for each fable. Students are then assembled into a circle for discussion. Begin discussion of each fable by having students identify the best moral and defend their choices. Most often each group will have written somewhat different morals. Whether the differences are slight or extreme, lively discussion ensues as students defend their choices and challenge others. They experience verbally a process that we want them to do mentally on their own—generate possible answers, evaluate each, and refine their ideas. In one class discussion, a group argued that the best moral for "The Man and His Two Wives" is "A person can never be happy with two wives." Another group disagreed and pointed out that in the story the most important thing was that both wives were ashamed of their husband. They concluded that the moral is "You should be happy with what you have instead of trying to change it." The debate continued as a group argued for another possible moral: "If you try to change something, you sometimes ruin it." At this point the value of designing this activity with fables that all deal with a similar concept becomes clear. The teacher can help students refine their moral for this fable by asking a question such as, "The other two fables, 'Venus and the Cat' and 'The Lion in Love,' also involve someone trying to change another; how are these fables different? In what ways would their morals be different? How could the morals be stated to emphasize these differences?" As students respond to questions like these, they refine their morals and reach a better understanding of the subtle differences in the authors' generalizations in the fables.

A possible follow-up writing assignment (Figure 15) is to have students write a short composition stating a moral for another romantic love fable such as Aesop's "The Fatal Marriage" and defending their moral using evidence from the text.

By using fables in this activity, we are not trying to suggest that an author's generalization is always moralistic. To bring out this idea in later discussions of authors' generalizations in poetry or short stories, ask a question such as "How is the author's generalization in a poem (or short story) different from a moral?" In this way, students themselves discover differences in various literary forms.

WHAT IS THE MORAL?

Venus and the Cat

Aesop

Once upon a time there was a cat who fell in love with a handsome young man. She prayed and prayed to Venus, the Goddess of Love, to give her the young man for a husband. So Venus, taking pity on the cat, changed her into a beautiful young lady. The man saw her and instantly fell in love. So the two were married, and the man took home the young lady as his bride.

But had she really changed, or was she still a cat underneath? Venus wanted to find out.

One day the goddess sent a little mouse into the lady's house, where she was sitting with her husband. At first the young lady did not notice the mouse, but suddenly she saw it. She made a quick movement and sprang upon it, and almost before the young man had seen the mouse, it was dead.

"So," said Venus to herself, "she may *look* like a young lady, but she behaves like a cat."

And the goddess was so angry that she changed the young lady back into a cat, and the young man never saw her again.

1. What things about the cat could Venus change and what things couldn't she change? Why couldn't she change some things? (Complex implied relationship)
2. Look at the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" from the previous activity. Find any statements with which you think the author of this fable would strongly agree or disagree. What in the fable leads you to your conclusions?
3. Make up a good moral for this fable. (In creating a moral, think about what the author is trying to show about love or love relationships or human nature.) What evidence in the fable leads you to this conclusion? (Author's generalization)

Figure 13. What Is the Moral? "Venus and the Cat" from *Fables from Aesop* by James Reeves. Copyright © 1962 by Henry Z. Walck. Reprinted by permission. This material may not be reproduced beyond classroom use without permission of the publisher.

ROMANTIC LOVE/MARRIAGE FABLES

Read each of the following fables and think about what each author seems to be showing about love, love relationships, or human nature. Write the best moral you can for each fable and explain what evidence from the fable led you to write the moral you did.

The Lion in Love

Aesop

Many years ago a lion fell in love with a woodcutter's daughter and begged that he might be given her hand in marriage.

The woodcutter was not at all pleased with the offer, and declined the honor of so dangerous a son-in-law. Whereupon the lion became very angry and threatened to use force if his suit was denied.

The poor man, seeing that the dangerous creature was in earnest, hit upon a plan whereby he could gain his ends without risking his life.

"I feel greatly flattered by your proposal," said he, "but, noble sir, what great teeth you have and what long claws! Where is the damsel that would not be alarmed by such frightful weapons? You must have your teeth drawn and your claws cut before you can hope to be accepted as a suitable bridegroom for my daughter."

So madly was the lion in love that he fell into the trap and sat quietly while the operation was being performed. He then claimed the daughter for his bride.

But the woodcutter was no longer afraid of his unwelcome visitor; he seized a stout stick and drove him from the door.

The Man and His Two Wives

Aesop

A man whose hair was turning gray had two wives, one young and the other old. The elderly woman felt ashamed at being married to a man younger than herself, and made it a practice whenever he was with her to pick out all his black hairs; while the younger, anxious to conceal the fact that she had an elderly husband, used, similarly, to pull out the gray ones. So, between them, it ended in the man being completely plucked, and becoming bald.

Figure 14. Romantic Love/Marriage Fables. "The Lion in Love" from *Aesop's Fables* published by Franklin Watts, Inc. "The Man and His Two Wives" from the *Caldecott Aesop* by Aesop. Copyright © 1978 by Michael Patrick Hearn. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc. This material may not be reproduced beyond classroom use without permission of the publisher.

FABLE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

Read the following fable and think about a good moral for it. Write a composition in which you state what you think would be a good moral and support your moral with specific evidence from the fable.

The Fatal Marriage

Aesop

The lion, freed from the snare, was exceedingly grateful to the little mouse which had helped him, and made up his mind to reward him handsomely. He therefore asked the mouse what he would like, and the little creature, full of ambition and determined to make the most of his chance, asked for the lion's daughter as a wife. The lion agreed at once, and called his daughter to come to her husband. The young lioness came bounding along, and, not expecting her future husband to be so small or near the ground, accidentally set her foot on him and crushed him to death as he was running to meet her.

Figure 15. Fable Writing Assignment. "The Fatal Marriage" from *Aesop's Fables* published by Franklin Watts, Inc.

Romantic Love/Marriage Poems

The purpose of this activity is to give students practice in interpreting author's generalizations in literary works that are more subtle and sophisticated than fables. They must also defend their interpretations in group and class discussions.

Assemble a set of four or five poems which imply generalizations about love, love relationships, infatuation, or marriage. Since students usually have difficulty interpreting poetry because of the amount of inference making required, it is important to choose poems that are accessible for the level of the students. If the vocabulary, syntax, and concepts are too difficult, students may not be able to comprehend even the literal level, and in that case, interpreting the author's (poet's) generalization would be too advanced a level at which to work. The poems presented in this activity work well with junior high and middle school as well as high school students. The procedures for this activity are basically the same as those for the previous fable activity.

Begin with the poem "The Choice" (Figure 16). Read it aloud or ask for a student volunteer to read. Give students the following discussion questions to work on individually for about fifteen to twenty minutes. Then, using these questions as a guide, lead a class discussion of the poem. The goal of the discussion is for students to generate possible statements of the author's (poet's) generalization and refine them so that an effective statement is achieved.

After the class discussion has reached closure, hand out the three short poems in Figure 17 dealing with love relationships. Following the same procedures as in the fable activity, students work in small groups and write a statement of the author's (poet's) generalization in each poem. They should explain the comment the poem makes about love or love relationships and the evidence in the poem that leads them to their conclusions. Give each group a dictionary and remind them to find meanings of all words with which they are unfamiliar.

When all groups have finished, lead a class discussion in the same manner as in the previous activity. Urge students to explain the evidence for their conclusions and to challenge conclusions with which they disagree. Also, refer students to the "Romantic Love/Marriage Survey" and ask them to find statements with which they think the poets might agree or disagree. For example, students often comment that "Carrefour" takes issue with Tennyson's often quoted solace, "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all." As students look at the survey in conjunction with the poems, they discover many interesting similarities and differences in the viewpoints suggested and hone their statements of the authors' (poets') generalizations.

To give the students practice in writing about author's generalization, have students choose one of the three poems discussed and write a short composition explaining the author's (poet's) generalization and the evidence in the poem that leads to their conclusions.

Author's (Poet's) Generalization Composition

In this activity, students write a short composition explaining the author's (poet's) generalization in a poem that has *not* been discussed in class. They work independently and apply to this new task the skills they have learned in previous activities. Hand out the composition assignment (Figure 18) for the poem "In the Metro." Students write a composition in which they (1) explain the generalization or comment the poem makes about love or marriage relationships and (2) argue, through effective use of evidence from the poem, their reasons for interpreting the meaning this way.

On the day that students bring their rough drafts to class, divide them into small groups to evaluate each other's papers. In groups, each student reads his or her paper aloud, and the other group members work together to fill out the check sheet about the composition (Figure 19). The group should discuss each paper with the writer and explain reasons for the comments selected. After the group discussions, the check sheets and papers should be given to the writers so they can make revisions and a final copy to turn in to the teacher.

From Quotations to Generalizations

Especially in a longer work such as a novel or a full-length play, it is often possible to identify several author's generalizations. When this is the case, it is useful to have students identify these various generalizations separately through activities and specific discussion questions rather than altogether through discussion of a general, all-purpose question such as "What is the author trying to say to us in this work?" Working with the generalizations separately not only forces students to be more specific but also allows interconnections among the generalizations once they

ANALYZING AN AUTHOR'S (OR A POET'S) GENERALIZATION

The Choice

He'd have given me rolling lands,
  Houses of marble, and billowing farms,
Pearls, to trickle between my hands,
  Smoldering rubies, to circle my arms.
You—you'd only a lilting song,
  Only a melody, happy and high,
You were sudden and swift and strong—
  Never a thought for another had I.

He'd have given me laces rare,
  Dresses that glimmered with frosty sheen,
Shiny ribbons to wrap my hair,
  Horses to draw me, as fine as a queen.
You—you'd only to whistle low,
  Gayly I followed wherever you led.
I took you, and I let him go—
  Somebody ought to examine my head!

Dorothy Parker

1. Define each of these words:
   billowing
   lilting
   smoldering
2. What was the only thing the suitor who was chosen had to offer to the speaker? (Key Detail)

3. What did the speaker do when her suitor would "whistle low"? (Stated Relationship)

4. Why does the speaker never have "a thought for another"? (Simple Implied Relationship)

5. What are the differences between the two suitors described in the poem? To which one is the speaker more attracted? For what reasons is she attracted to him rather than the other suitor? (Complex Implied Relationship)

6. The speaker expresses two different feelings about choosing the man she did. What are the different feelings she expresses? Why does she have these different feelings? (Complex Implied Relationship)

7. State the comment or generalization the poem makes about love or love relationships. Give specific evidence from the poem to support your conclusion. (Author's/Poet's Generalization)

Figure 16. Analyzing Author's (Poet's) Generalization. "The Choice" from *The Portable Dorothy Parker* by Dorothy Parker. Copyright © 1926, 1954 by Dorothy Parker. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin, Inc. This material may not be reproduced beyond classroom use without permission of the publisher.

ROMANTIC LOVE/MARRIAGE POEMS

Read each poem carefully and be sure to look up words you do not know. For each poem, write a statement of the author's (poet's) generalization. In other words, explain the comment the poem makes about love, marriage, or relationships. Be prepared to offer specific evidence that supports your interpretations.

Carrefour
(French for 'crossroad')

O you,
Who came upon me once
Stretched under apple-trees just after
bathing,
Why did you not strangle me before
speaking
Rather than fill me with the wild white
honey of your words
And then leave me to the mercy
Of the forest bees?

Amy Lowell

Symptoms of Love

Love is a universal migraine,
A bright stain on the vision
Blotting out reason.

Symptoms of true love
Are leanness, jealousy,
Laggard dawns;

Are omens and nightmares—
Listening for a knock,
Waiting for a sign:

For a touch of her fingers
In a darkened room,
For a searching look.

Take courage, lover!
Could you endure such pain
At any hand but hers?

Robert Graves

Love Is Not All

Love is not all; it is not meat nor drink
Nor slumber nor a roof against the rain;
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;
Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath,
Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;
Yet many a man is making friends with death
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.
It well may be that in a difficult hour,
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,
Or nagged by want past resolution's power,
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,
Or trade the memory of this night for food.
It well may be. I do not think I would.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Figure 17. Romantic Love/Marriage Poems. "Carrefour" from *The Complete Poetical Works of Amy Lowell.* Copyright © 1955 by Houghton Mifflin Company. Copyright © renewed 1983 by Houghton Mifflin Company, Brinton P. Roberts, Esquire and G. D'Andelot Belin, Esquire. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company. "Symptoms of Love" from *Collected Poems.* Copyright © 1975 by Robert Graves. Reprinted by permission of A. P. Watts Ltd. for Robert Graves. "Love Is Not All" from *Collected Poems.* Harper & Row. Copyright © 1931, 1958 by Edna St. Vincent Millay and Norma Millay Ellis. This material may not be reproduced beyond classroom use without permission of the publisher.

COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENT

Read the following poem and write a composition in which you (1) explain the generalization or comment the poem makes about love, marriage, or relationships and (2) explain, through effective use of evidence from the poem, the reasons for your interpretation of the poem's meaning.

In the Metro
(subway)

I know: I'll never meet again
the girl I met the other day,
the girl with shining legs in the metro.
I know: she goes her way
And I go mine . . . and yet
I'm sad, though I don't know why.
The escalator carried her away
just as a river—a flower to the sea,
while I, crucified to family duties,
stood, transfixed,
on the platform
with a shopping bag dangling from my hand. . .

Mikhail Kvlividze

Figure 18. Composition Assignment. "In the Metro" by Mikhail Kvlividze from *Soviet Life* (September 1968). Published by Novosti Press Agency.

CHECK SHEET

Name of writer:

Names of evaluators:

Check the statement(s) that best describes the paper you are evaluating. You may check *more than one statement* for each item. Please add any notes that might help the writer in making revisions.

1. Does the paper state the poet's generalization about love, love relationships, or family relationships?

   _____ yes _____ it's there but not clearly stated _____ no

2. Does the paper give the title of the poem and the name of the poet?

   _____ yes _____ no

3. The generalization stated in the paper

   _____ expresses exactly what the poem means.

   _____ is partly right but misses some important things in the poem.

   _____ is an interesting idea but does not seem to be suggested in the poem.

   _____ is not clear.

   _____ (There is no generalization stated in this paper.)

4. Evidence:

   _____ The writer presents four or five examples or details from the poem as evidence.

   _____ There is additional evidence in the poem that the writer should use to support the conclusions.

   _____ The writer mentions a few things that happen in the poem but is not very specific about them (does not use exact words or quote specific lines).

   _____ Some evidence is provided but it does not relate to the stated generalization.

   _____ The paper presents almost no evidence.

5. Warrants:

   _____ The writer explains clearly *how* each example or detail used as evidence supports the generalization.

   _____ Sometimes the writer clearly explains how the evidence supports the generalization, and sometimes he or she does not.

   _____ The writer needs to add an explanation of how each example or piece of evidence supports the generalization.

6. The paper ends with a brief summary (about one or two sentences) explaining again the poet's generalization or idea about relationships (preferably using slightly different words, in order to clarify for the reader the poet's meaning).

   _____ yes _____ no

Figure 19. Check Sheet.

have been identified. Such is the case in a work as complex as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

Central to the book is an understanding of the relationship between Daisy and Gatsby. In order for students to answer a question concerning the generalization Fitzgerald is making about relationships like Daisy and Gatsby's, students must have an overview of the story's action and outcome. They must also understand Daisy's significance to Gatsby and what Daisy was really like. Although students may understand upon completion of the novel that Daisy is Gatsby's all-consuming passion, a more complete picture of her significance to him requires a careful examination of the text's references to Daisy. Thus, a careful answer to the author's generalization question requires students to identify relevant passages in the book, to infer a relationship among those passages, and to apply this knowledge to the generalization question at hand. This is a somewhat formidable task even for trained English scholars!

One strategy to help reduce cognitive overload would be to provide students with a set of significant quotations from the work to examine closely. In addition, asking students to interpret complex implied relationships, a familiar skill which they have practiced, would prepare them for work at the higher levels. With this support, students then can more easily focus their attention on making claims about an author's generalization.

After students have finished an initial reading of *The Great Gatsby*, pass out Figure 20.

After students have completed this handout, ask them for their answers to the first two questions. In the whole-class discussion, emphasize the specific use of text in supporting the conclusions which the students suggest. After the discussion, give students time to revise their answers to question 3, if they wish, before collecting the activity sheets.

On a ditto or on an overhead transparency, duplicate several student answers to question 3. On the following day, show students their various author's generalization statements. Ask students for their assessment of the best ones. What makes them good? Complete? For instance, a student will often pick up on the superficial aspect of Daisy and Gatsby's relationship and write something such as, "Fitzgerald is saying that superficial relationships, like Daisy and Gatsby's, that are based on wealth do not last." While this answer is accurate, it is not fully developed as a statement which would also discuss how relationships like Daisy and Gatsby's fail because they are based in illusions, unrealistic expectations, and false assumptions rather than on reality.

After assessing ideas concerning Fitzgerald's generalization, students can further practice effectively supporting their ideas through the activity in Figure 21.

Have students, working in pairs, evaluate the logic of each other's claim, evidence, and warrants. As follow-up writing practice, students may use this activity sheet as the basis of a short theme which answers the question, "What generalization is Fitzgerald making about relationships like Daisy and Gatsby's?"

Love Triangle

In many literary works authors present contrasting characters to underscore their comments about human nature and society. This activity has students examine the contrasts between two characters to arrive at an author's generalization. In *The Great Gatsby*, Tom Buchanan and Jay Gatsby, Daisy's two "suitors," provide a striking contrast. The tension in the novel's climactic scene comes from the necessity for Daisy to choose between the two. Thus, the three form a love triangle.

This activity builds on "Quotations to Generalizations" by having students interpret further author's generalizations concerning relationships. However, "Love Triangle" requires more sophisticated thinking from students because they must find all their own evidence from the novel to support their generalizations. In the final step of the activity, they apply what they have learned to interpreting an author's generalization on a new subject, how wealth affects human behavior.

After students have completed the "Quotations to Generalizations" activity, hand out the "Love Triangle" activity sheet (Figure 22). As a first step, make sure that students are familiar with the definitions of all the terms listed within the triangle. Have them look up unfamiliar words on their own or define the words in class discussion. Then, since the activity involves two parts which are to be completed in two separate steps, instruct students to complete *only* Part I of the sheet on their own and, once they have finished this step, to stop and wait for further instructions.

When students have completed Part I, before going on to Part II, divide them into small groups to compare their answers. To help guide the small group

QUOTATIONS TO GENERALIZATIONS

Read carefully the passages below from *The Great Gatsby* and use them to answer the three questions. Be sure to include specific references to the passages in your answers.

1. According to Nick and Gatsby, what does Daisy represent for Gatsby?
2. What is Daisy really like?
3. What kind of relationship do Daisy and Gatsby have? What generalization is Fitzgerald making about this kind of relationship?

"All right," said Daisy. "What'll we plan?" She turned to me [Nick] helplessly: "What do people plan?"

The instant her [Daisy's] voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me.

He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail. He knew Daisy was extraordinary, but he didn't realize just how extraordinary a 'nice girl' could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby nothing. He felt married to her, that was all.

She was the first 'nice' girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people, but always with indiscernible barbed wire between.

It passed and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

"For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. . . . She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand."

They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness.

His [Gatsby's] heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up to his own. He knew that when he kissed the girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God. . . . At his lips' touch she blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.

'Her voice is full of money,' he said suddenly. That was it. . . .—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the tingle of it, the cymbals' song of it . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl.

Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.

He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he reevaluated everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes.

After his [Gatsby's] embarrassment and his unreasoning joy, he was consumed with wonder at her presence.

Figure 20. Quotations to Generalizations.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

In the space provided below, write your claim about the generalization Fitzgerald is making about relationships like Daisy and Gatsby's. In the spaces marked A, B, C, and D, copy evidence (quotes) which supports your claim. You may use two quotes found on the "Quotations to Generalizations" activity sheet, but at least two quotes must be new evidence which you find from the text. Finally, write a warrant for each piece of evidence.

Claim:

A.

B.

C.

D.

Figure 21. Making Connections.

LOVE TRIANGLE

Part I

Inside the triangle below are descriptive words and phrases which may characterize Tom, Daisy, and/or Gatsby. List those which you feel are appropriately descriptive of each character under his or her name. You may use the words and phrases for more than one character or not at all. All blanks need not be filled. All characters need not have the same number of descriptive words and phrases associated with them.

Tom	insincere, idealistic, East Egg, purposeless, pragmatic, hypocritical, careful, gentle, inherited position, romantic, brutal, sensitive, pessimistic, purposeful, self-made man, optimistic, sincere, West Egg, wealthy, authentic, insensitive, careless	Jay
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

Daisy

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Part II

Based on your discussion of Part I, answer the following questions.

A. In the end, why does Daisy choose Tom? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.

B. Why does Tom and Daisy's relationship last while Daisy and Gatsby's does not? What evidence can you find to support your claim?

C. What generalization is Fitzgerald making about the basis of a lasting relationship? Explain and cite evidence for your conclusion.

D. What role does wealth play in both of these relationships? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.

E. What comment or generalization does this novel make about the way we influences human behavior and attitudes? Offer evidence for your answer.

Figure 22. Love Triangle.

discussion of Part I, put the following questions on the blackboard:

1. How would you compare and contrast your descriptive words and phrases for
   Tom and Gatsby,
   Daisy and Gatsby, and
   Daisy and Tom?
2. What does each share with the other?
3. Is there anything which all three share?

As the discussion develops, students begin to see that terms such as *insensitive* for Tom and *sensitive* for Jay suggest a strong contrast. Their discussion of such contrasts enables them to see that Tom and Gatsby are, for the most part, opposites. On the other hand, students see that Daisy and Tom have much in common and that the only thing all three characters share is, of course, wealth. Understanding these relationships prepares students for Part II of the activity.

After students have reached a consensus on their answers to Part I, have the groups discuss and fill out the answers to the questions in Part II. Finally, reassemble the class and lead a discussion focusing on the questions in Part II. Since students have had to find evidence on their own, it is important to discuss the quality and appropriateness of the evidence they have found. Also, they must explain how the evidence supports their claims. As students go through the steps outlined in this activity, they are interpreting author's generalizations and gathering and selecting evidence to support their interpretations. In the final step, the whole-class discussion, students must present and defend their interpretations to an audience, their peers.

Although the activity sheet is specifically designed for use with *The Great Gatsby,* it could be modified and used with other works in which an author presents contrasting characters whose relationship is key to understanding the author's generalizations.

From Taba Model to Composing

This activity culminates in a writing assignment in which students apply the skills which they have been practicing in this sequence. Involving two new works of literature, it is an evaluation step to see if students can apply their skills in a new situation. Based on the theoretical work of Hilda Taba (1947), the activity's design reflects a three-part structure in which students, as Taba explains, form concepts, interpret concepts, and finally apply concepts. This activity comes last in the sequence because it is less structured and almost entirely student-directed once the procedures are outlined by the teacher. This procedure is easily adapted for other works or groups of works which share a common concept.

In preparation for this activity, have students read Fitzgerald's short stories, "The Rich Boy" and "Winter Dreams." To begin the activity, ask students to name the characters in *The Great Gatsby* and in the two short stories. This is a very general and unintimidating step in which everyone can participate. Once all characters have been recorded on the board, ask students to suggest groupings of characters based on some common element. For instance, one student might suggest grouping Gatsby, George Wilson, Myrtle Wilson, Paula Legendre, Irene Scheerer, and Cary Sloane. Another might group Daisy Buchanan, Jordan Baker, Tom Buchanan, and Judy Jones together. Of course, characters may be used in more than one group. A Recorder (either the teacher or a student) keeps a record of the groups made with a system of notations on the board. Finally, students must give names to the groupings they have created. These names reflect the logic behind originally forming the group. At this point, for example, students would name the group with Gatsby, the Wilsons, Paula Legendre, Irene Scheerer, and Cary Sloane as "victims" (△) and the group with the Buchanans, Jordan Baker, and Judy Jones as "careless ones" (◇). An example using *The Great Gatsby,* "Winter Dreams," and "The Rich Boy" illustrates this entire process. Figure 23 illustrates what these groupings might look like on the blackboard after students have gone through the steps outlined so far.

Of course, the groupings of this example are not definitive. Each class will arrive at its own conclusions. Naturally, too, some groupings are more sophisticated than others and offer more potential for the next step of the activity, the final writing assignment. For example, a grouping like "bachelors" is probably not going to be useful in helping students deal with author's generalizations. On the other hand, a grouping like "old money" offers much potential for either one of the following assignments.

After students have finished creating and naming groupings, they are given the following writing assignment: Pick a grouping that will shed some light on one of the following questions: What generalization or comment does Fitzgerald make about American society and its values? Or, What generalization does Fitzgerald make about the way wealth influences human behavior and attitudes?

Students might bring in their rough drafts and critique their compositions in pairs or small groups before turning in their final assignments. During revision, students should be sure all claims are adequately supported with evidence and warrants.

With the completion of this final step, students have formed groupings, interpreted author's generalizations, and written an essay supporting their interpretations with specific evidence.

Character Groupings

Nick Carraway ♡ ♧ ♤
Jay Gatsby △ ▲ ♥ ◆ ♤
Daisy Buchanan ♡ ◇ ■ ● ♣ □
Jordan Baker ♡ ◇ ■ ● □
Tom Buchanan ♡ ◇ ■ ● ♠ ♣
George Wilson △
Myrtle Wilson △ ○ ♣ □
Catherine ○ □
Owl Eyes ♧
Meyer Wolfsheim ▲
Dan Cody ▲ ● ◆
Michaelis
Henry C. Gatz ○
Mr. McKee ○
Anson Hunter ♡ ♤ ■ ● ♠
Paula Legendre □ △
Dolly Karger □
"Rich Boy" narrator ♤ ♧
Cary Sloane △ ♤
Edna Hunter □ ♣
Judy Jones □ ◇ ● ♠
Dexter Green ♤ ▲ ♥ ◆
Irene Scheerer □ △

Grouping Notations

□ women
△ victims
○ poor impressed by wealth
♡ survivors
◇ careless ones
♤ eligible bachelors
♧ observers
■ old money
▲ new money
● rootless
♥ dreamers
◆ self-made man
♠ arrogant
♣ spouse cheaters

Figure 23. Character Groupings and Notations.

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